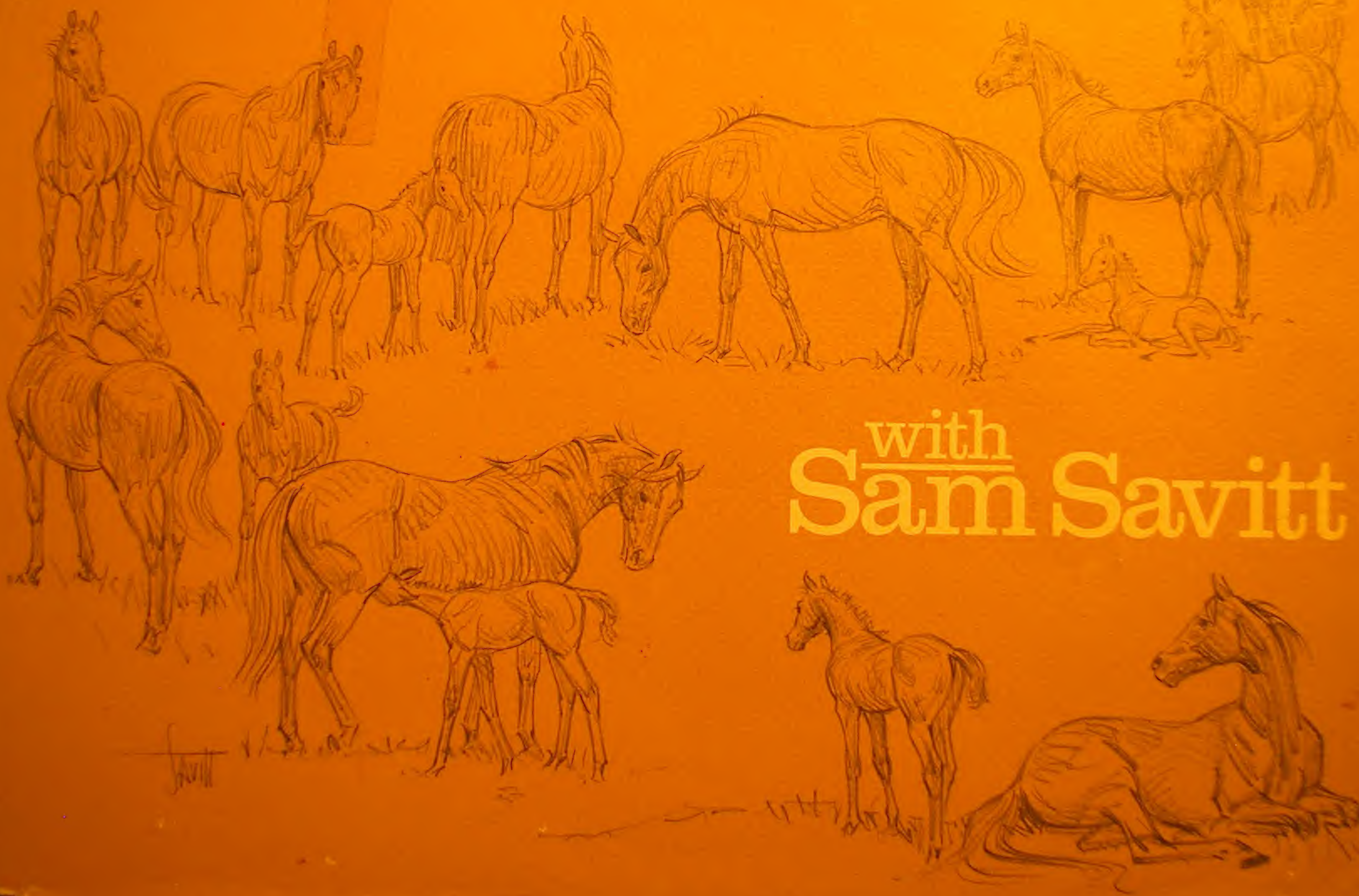


with Horses



with  
**Sam Savitt**



# Draw Horses

—with—

## Sam Savitt

This is a step-by-step course in drawing the horse—one of the most beautiful animals and among the most challenging subjects for both amateur and professional artists. Sam Savitt, America's foremost equine artist, has written over fourteen books and illustrated more than one hundred, in addition to creating horse charts that are known throughout the world. Yet he has never done a book about drawing his favorite subject—until now. Here he teaches the aspiring artist how to observe horses, both at rest and in action, and he shows the reader how to discern and render the physical variations effected by age, size, conformation, and breed. He shares the drawing techniques that he has developed over many years, which will enable even the beginner to achieve professional results.





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A Studio Book • The Viking Press • New York



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## INTRODUCTION

In order to create a good painting of a horse from life or from a photograph, an artist must paint what he or she knows in addition to what he sees, and he must know a great deal more than he sees.

Many equestrian painters today do not really *draw* horses. They copy with paint all the lights and darks they see in a photograph, but what they do not seem to know is that photographs often distort form. Unless an artist understands the construction of the horse and how it functions, his pictures are no more than a meaningless collection of light and dark areas.

A good drawing can be a valued entity in itself, but, more important, it is a necessary foundation for a good painting. Many of the old masters made countless drawings of their subjects before they began to paint them.

All the drawings in this book were done with pencils—both hard and soft. At times I wedged the point to get a halftone effect; at other times I used the point right out of the pencil sharpener to get a linear effect. The tools I use to create a drawing are relatively unimportant, however, for there are many ways to accomplish the same thing. Once you have mastered the art of drawing, you will be able to pull a horse right out of your head and make him come alive in whatever medium you are using.

I have been fascinated by horses all my life. As a child I actually wanted to *be* a horse. I copied their actions in every way I could. I was a harness horse for a while, pulling the neighborhood kids about in a coaster wagon and holding a rope bit in my mouth for the sake of realism. I allowed myself to be tied up and would stand in the corner of a room for long periods, shifting my weight from one leg to the other as I had seen horses do. Once at the dinner table I even stuck my face down into a bowl of soup and slurped it up the same way a horse would. I was forever imitating horses. To imitate, one must observe, and observing and remembering were my first steps in learning to draw horses.

Of course I don't expect you to go through the same shenanigans that I did, but I want you to understand that there is no magic involved in drawing. In fact, drawing can be as simple as writing. You must learn to form letters before you can make a word. In order to draw a horse, you must learn to form the parts before you can make the whole horse.

Drawing is a skill that can be learned by anyone with average eyesight and average eye-hand coordination. If you can thread a needle or catch a ball, you can learn to draw. If your handwriting is readable or if you can print legibly, you have enough dexterity to draw well. Drawing is not very difficult. *Seeing* is the problem. You may feel that you see things just fine and that drawing them is the hard part, but actually the opposite is true.

Knowing how the horse might react in a given situation will determine what you will do with him in a drawing. Remember that the horse

is a creature of flight, not fight. He will shy at the drop of a hat or practically leap out of his skin at the mere sight of a rock. Yet, strangely enough, he can be taught to gallop headlong into gunfire or to jump over tremendously imposing obstacles. He is basically a herd animal, preferring the company of other horses, but he and man have struck up a special relationship that has carried them together through centuries of war, work, sport, and art.

Every bit of knowledge you pick up about horses will come to your aid when you draw them. If possible, you should visit horses, talk to them, run your hands over their sleek backs and hard legs. Observe them constantly wherever and whenever you can—in real life, in photographs, in movies, and on television. Study all the drawings of horses you can find to see how other equestrian artists have handled the subject. On the following pages you will see drawings of horses doing just about everything that horses do. You will undergo a continuous test of your observation. Make the most of it, for watching horses is the best way to learn about them.

One exercise to improve your power of observation is to study a drawing or photograph of a horse for a minute or two, then remove the picture from your vision and try to draw what you remember.

If you have a live horse to work from, this exercise is even more challenging, for even the quietest horse is usually in motion—grazing or fidgeting in his stall. But you don't necessarily have to draw the whole horse; a back leg, front leg, or any other part will do while you are learning to observe.

I have often noticed that when I am riding in an automobile as a passenger over an unknown route I rarely remember the road as well as if I were driving that automobile myself over that same road. The reason for this is that when I am driving I am observing and concentrating on the way I am going. If you consider yourself the "driver" when you are drawing a horse, you will remember all the twists and turns of his conformation.

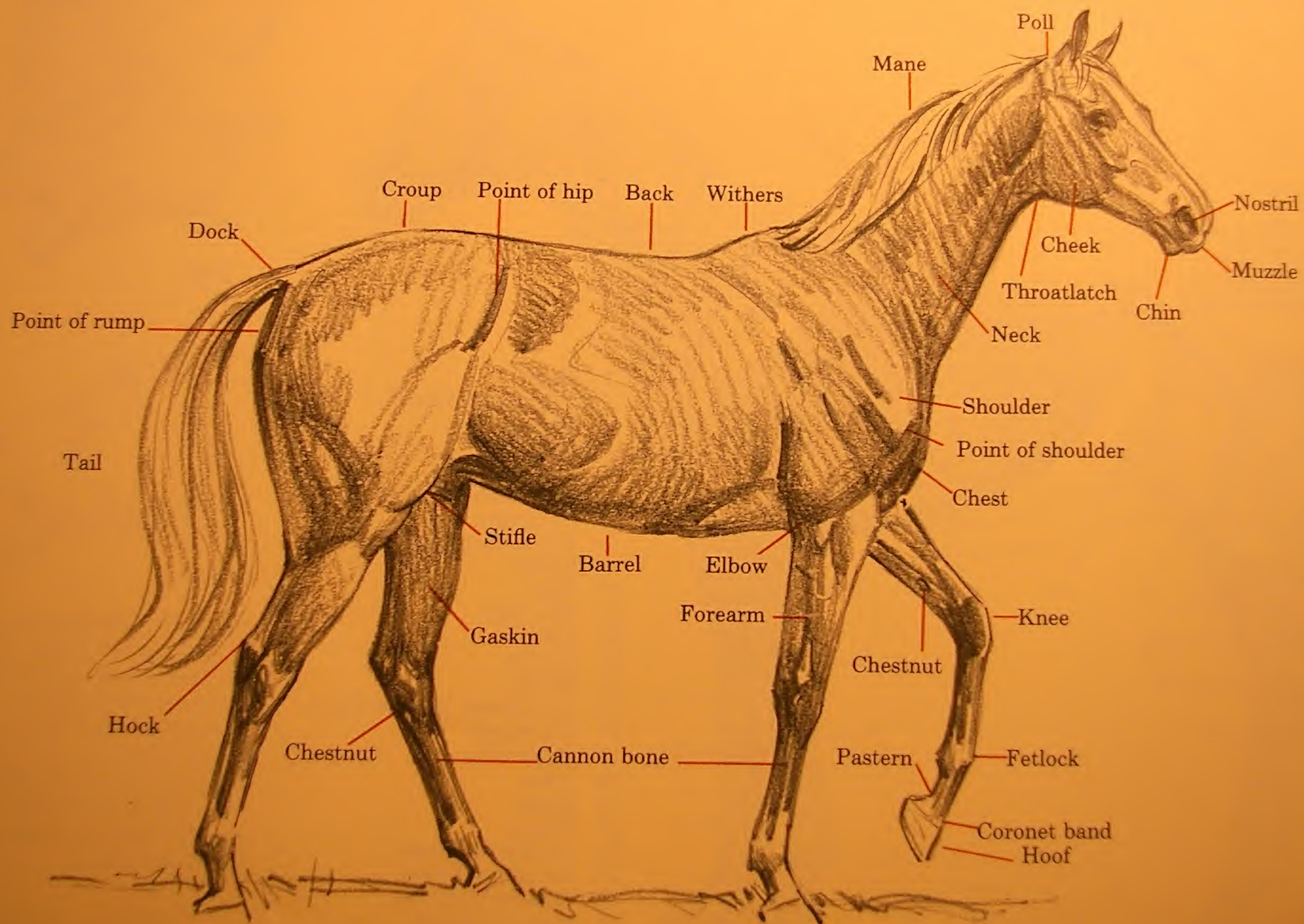
Later in this book I will show you methods of working that I have used to get effective results. But first you will learn the basics of drawing a horse. Then you can begin to emphasize, and perhaps exaggerate, the things about him that you particularly like. In the long run, your own point of view will become your style. At all times keep in mind that you must never sacrifice the artistic quality of your drawing for the horse as you see him. By that I mean you should draw horses like an artist—not like a technician. If a highlight or a shadow disturbs the form, eliminate it in your drawing in order to clarify what you are trying to show.

Now let me show you how to look at a horse, and remember that sight is a faculty, but seeing is an art.



## 1 / PARTS OF THE HORSE

Learning the names of the different parts of the horse will enable you to locate the areas I refer to as we go along.



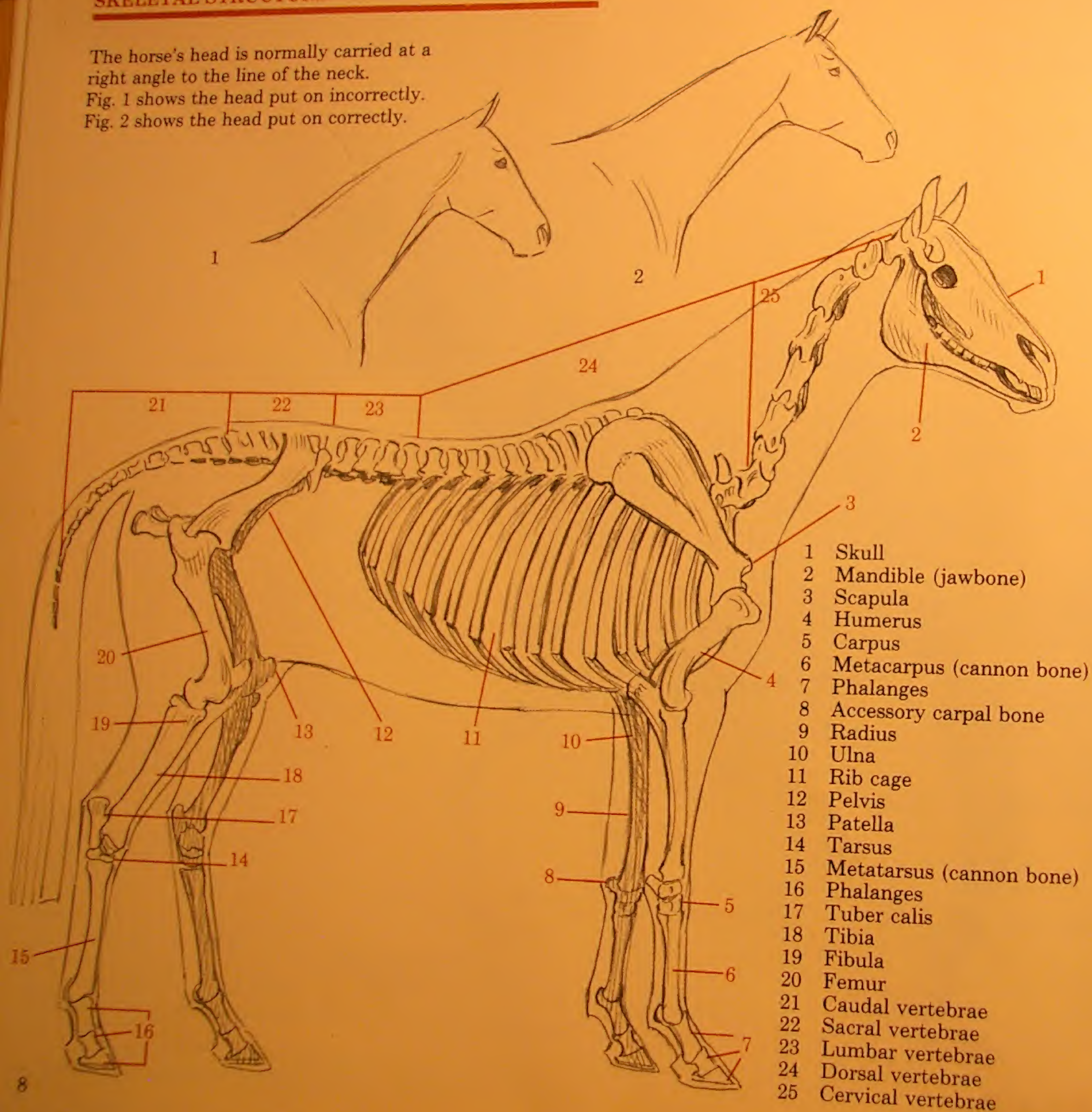


# SKELETAL STRUCTURE

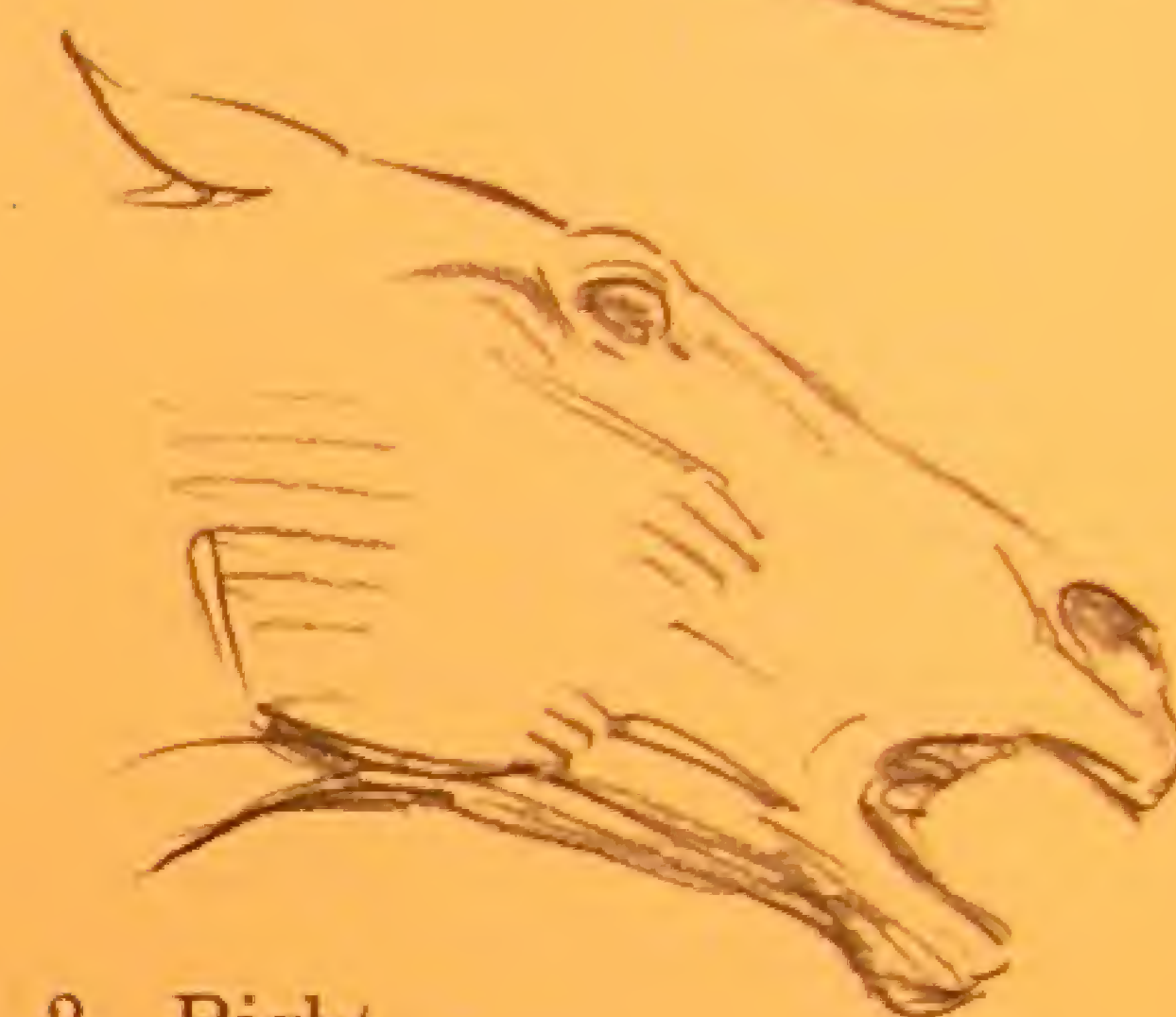
The horse's head is normally carried at a right angle to the line of the neck.

Fig. 1 shows the head put on incorrectly.

Fig. 2 shows the head put on correctly.



1



2 Right



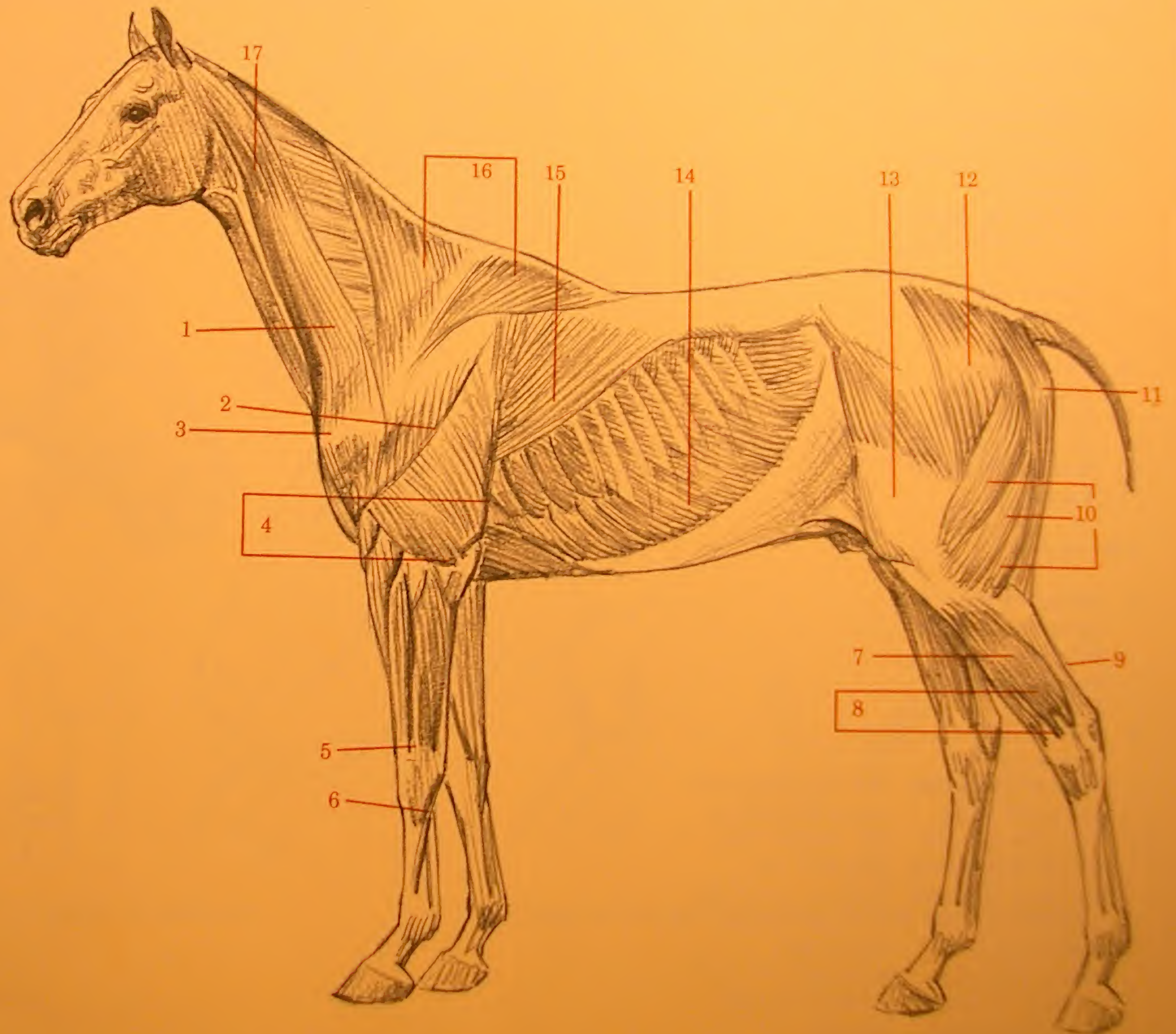
3 Wrong

Notice how the bone structure around the eye socket and the hard ridgeline above the molars in the skull show through the skin. The jaw hinges behind the eye socket, and when the mouth opens, the action begins at that point and not from the corner of the mouth as in fig. 3.



# MUSCULAR SYSTEM

- 1 Brachiocephalicus
- 2 Deltoideus
- 3 Pectoralis
- 4 Triceps brachii
- 5 Extensor carpi radialis
- 6 Extensor digitorum
- 7 Tibialis anterior
- 8 Extensor digitorum
- 9 Flexor digitorum
- 10 Biceps femoris
- 11 Semitendinosus
- 12 Glutaeus
- 13 Quadriceps femoris
- 14 Obliquus abdominis extensor
- 15 Latissimus dorsi
- 16 Trapezius
- 17 Sterno cephalicus



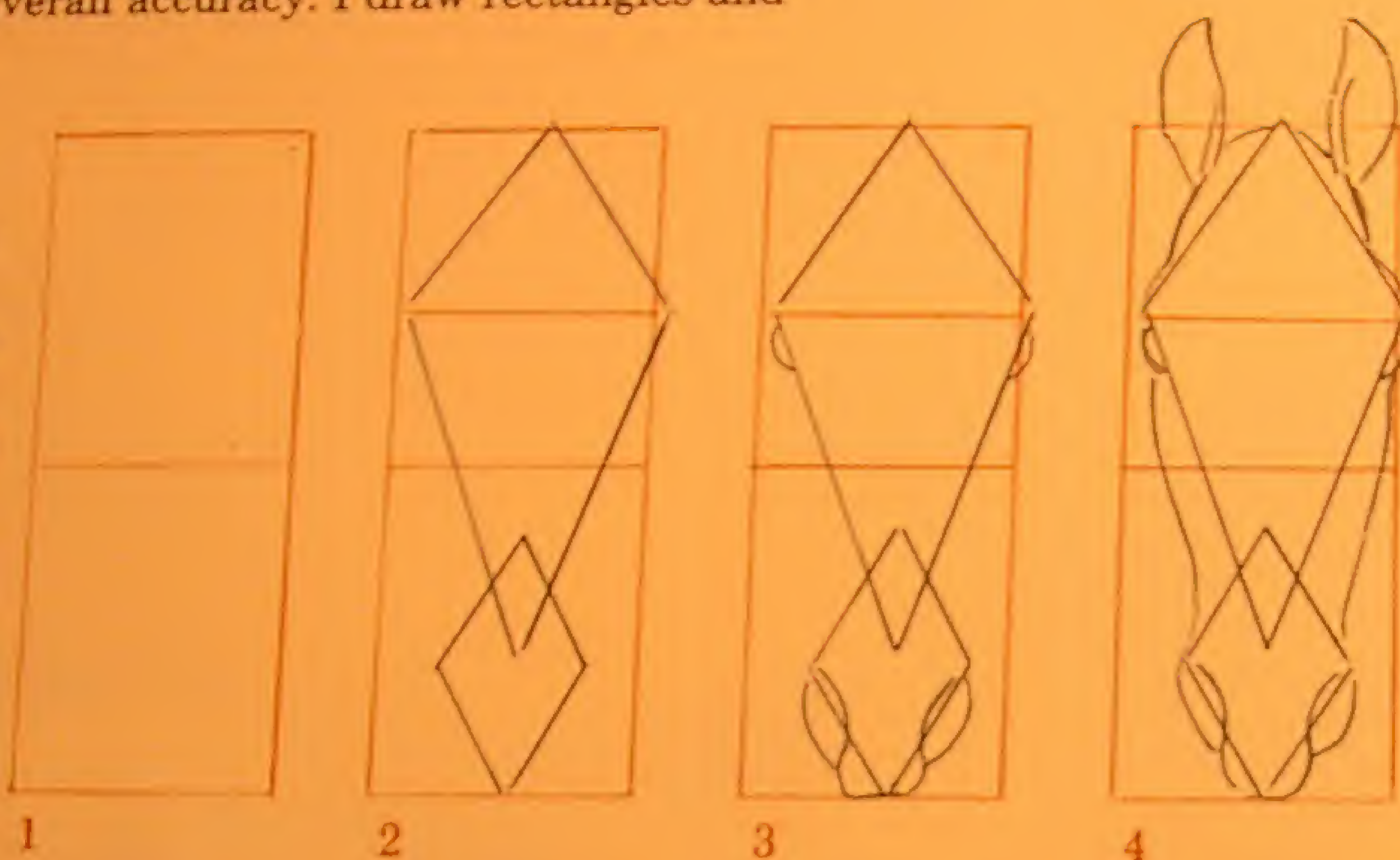


## THE HEAD

Although the head of any particular horse will be different from the heads of other horses, it will be useful for you to learn the general proportions of the ideal horse's head in order to draw the individual with overall accuracy. I draw rectangles and boxes as guidelines.

### Front view

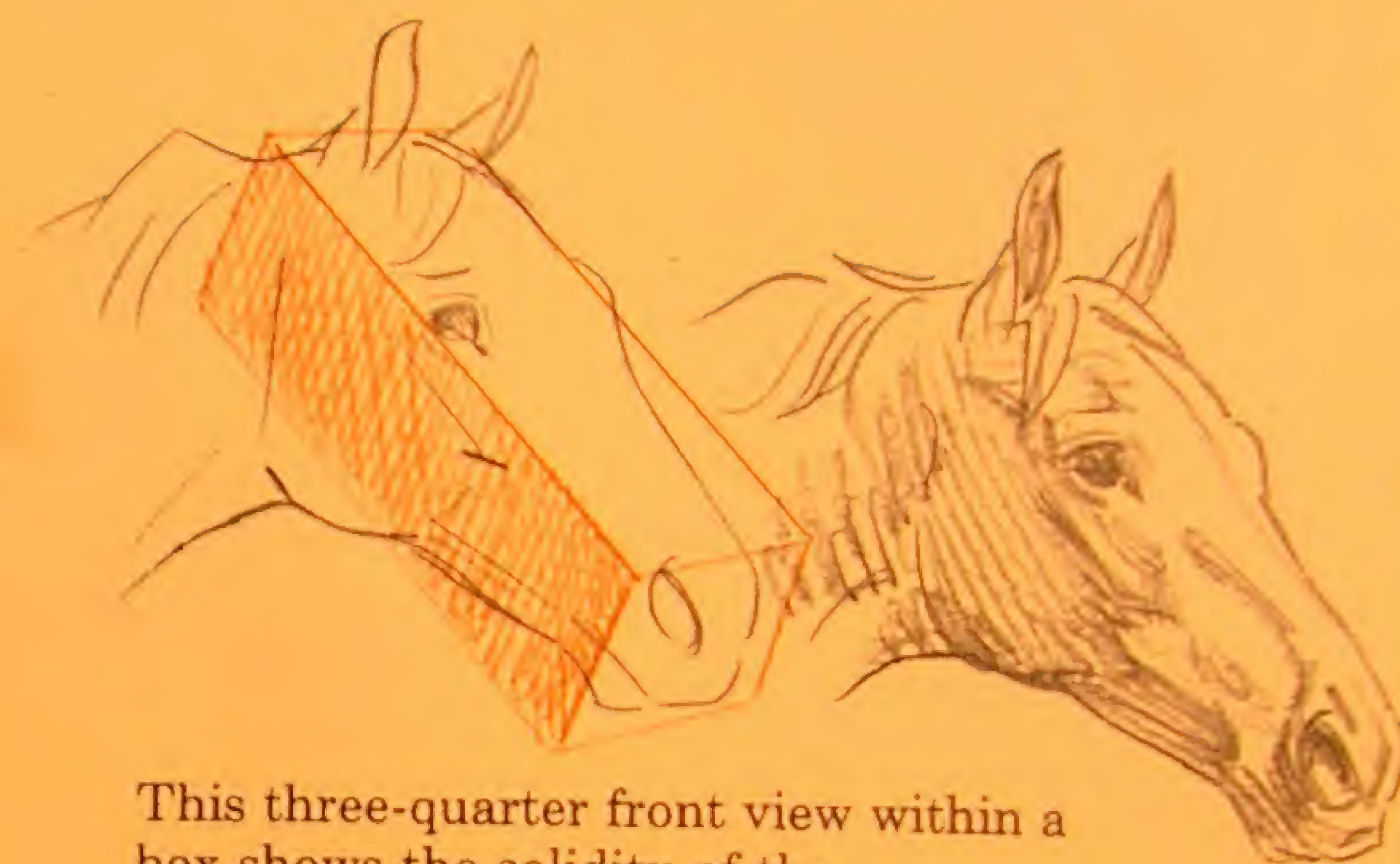
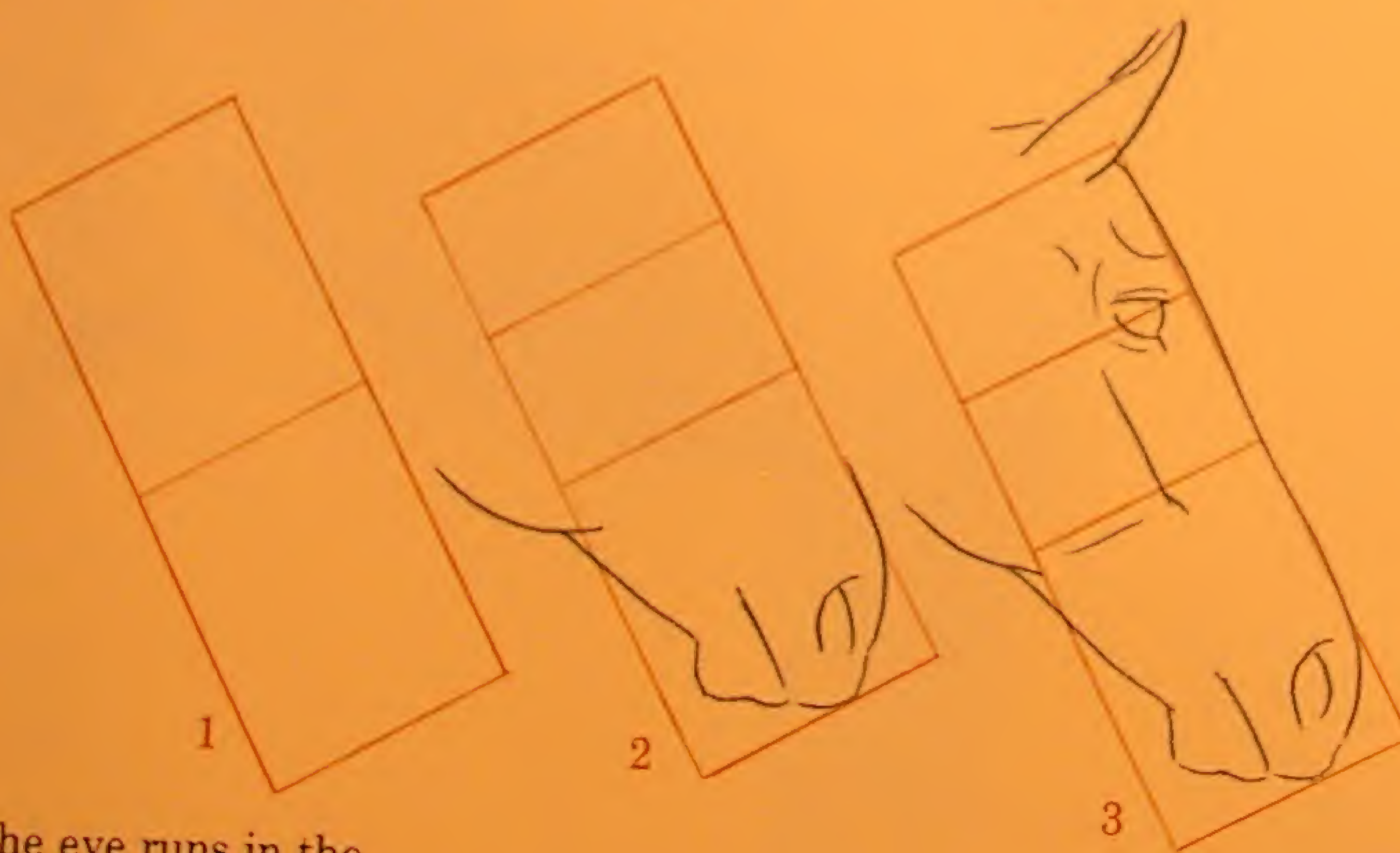
1. Draw a rectangle two and a half times higher than it is wide and divide it in half as shown.
2. Divide the upper part in half and draw two interlocking diamond shapes as indicated.
3. Put eyes and nostrils in place.
4. Draw the rest of the head using the diamond shapes as a guide.



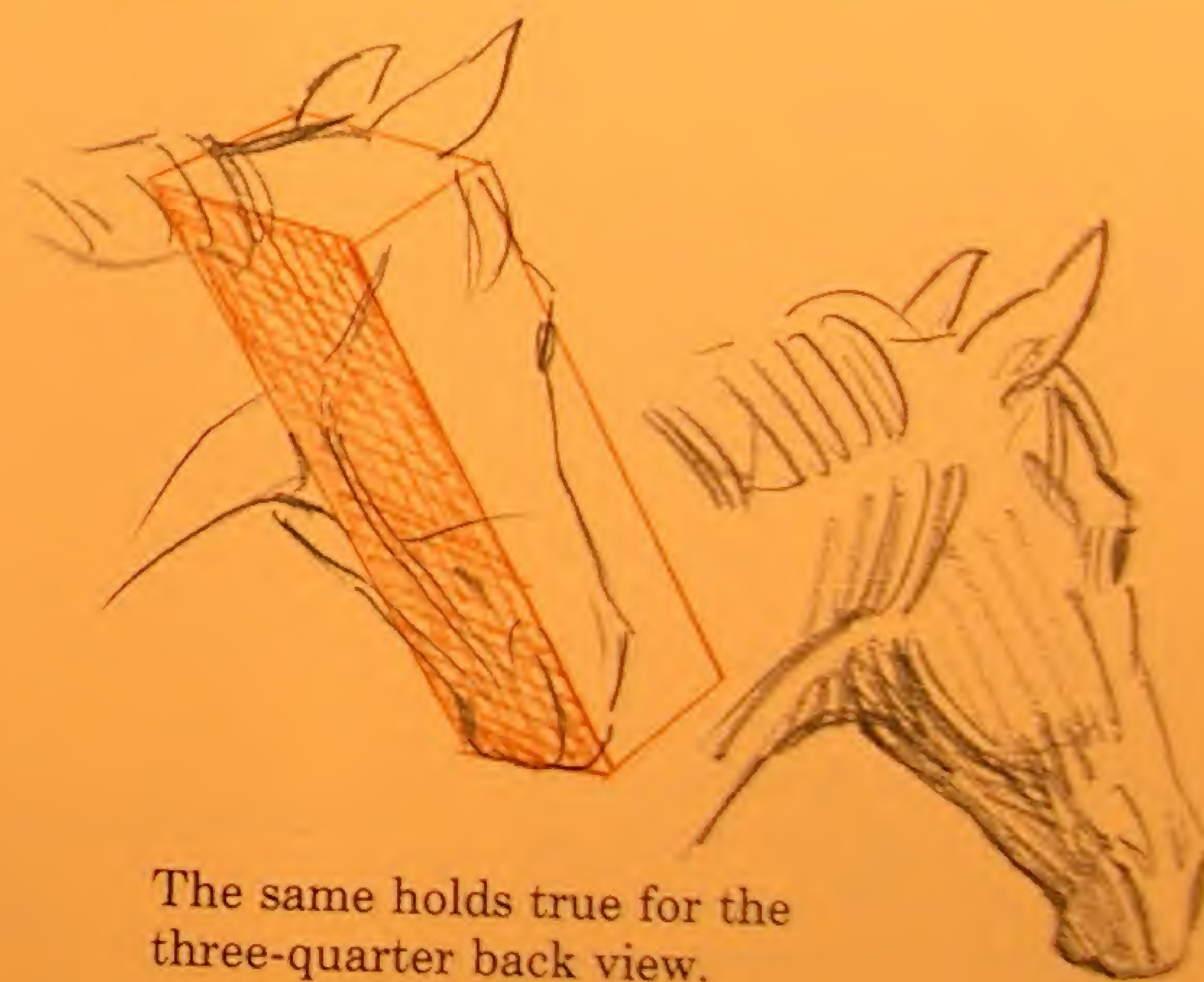
### Side view

1. Make the same rectangle as above but on an angle and divide it in half.
2. Divide the upper part in half and draw in the muzzle and cheek lines.
3. Place the eye on the dividing line in the upper part and complete the rest of the head as shown. Note that the ridge of the cheekbone below

the eye runs in the same direction as the mouth. Note also that the halfway line of the rectangle is just above the indentation marking the jaw muscle.



This three-quarter front view within a box shows the solidity of the head—that it has length, width, and thickness.



The same holds true for the three-quarter back view.



## The Ears

The ears are shaped somewhat like funnels. They do not change their shape much, but they move so frequently that you might think they do. Here are a few tips for keeping track of them.



Note that the tips of the ears point inward when the horse is alert, outward when he is relaxed.



The ears can move together or separately.

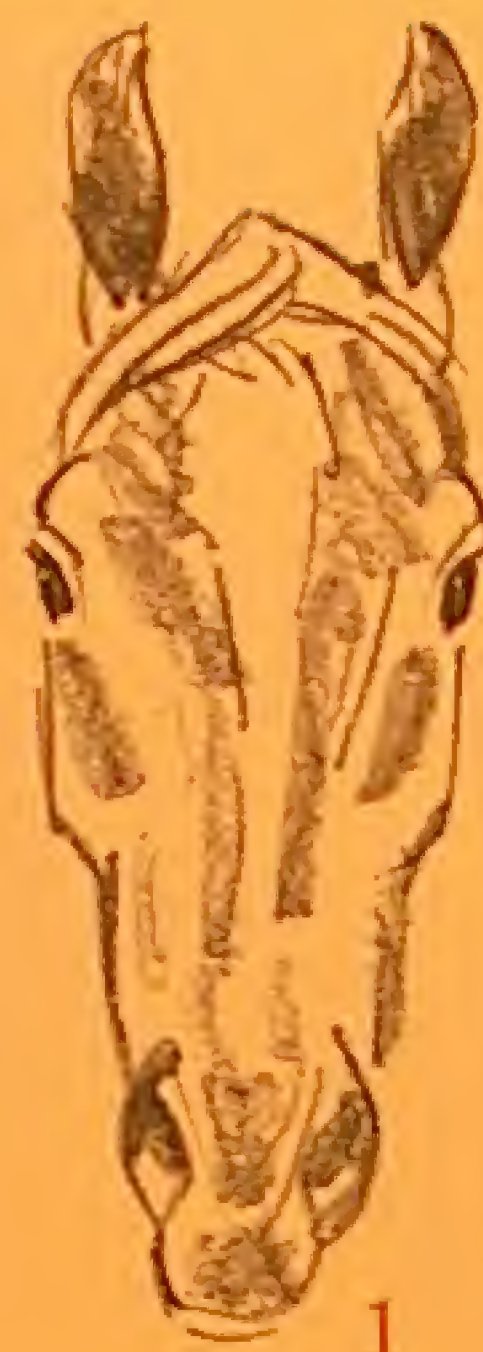
The ears will tell you if a horse is sharply alert or relaxed.



## The Eyes

The eyes help to give the head character and expression. They are situated on the sides of the head as shown in fig. 1. Notice how the position of the eye seems to change as the head turns toward a three-quarter view.

It is incorrect to place eyes in the front part of the head.





## THE LEGS

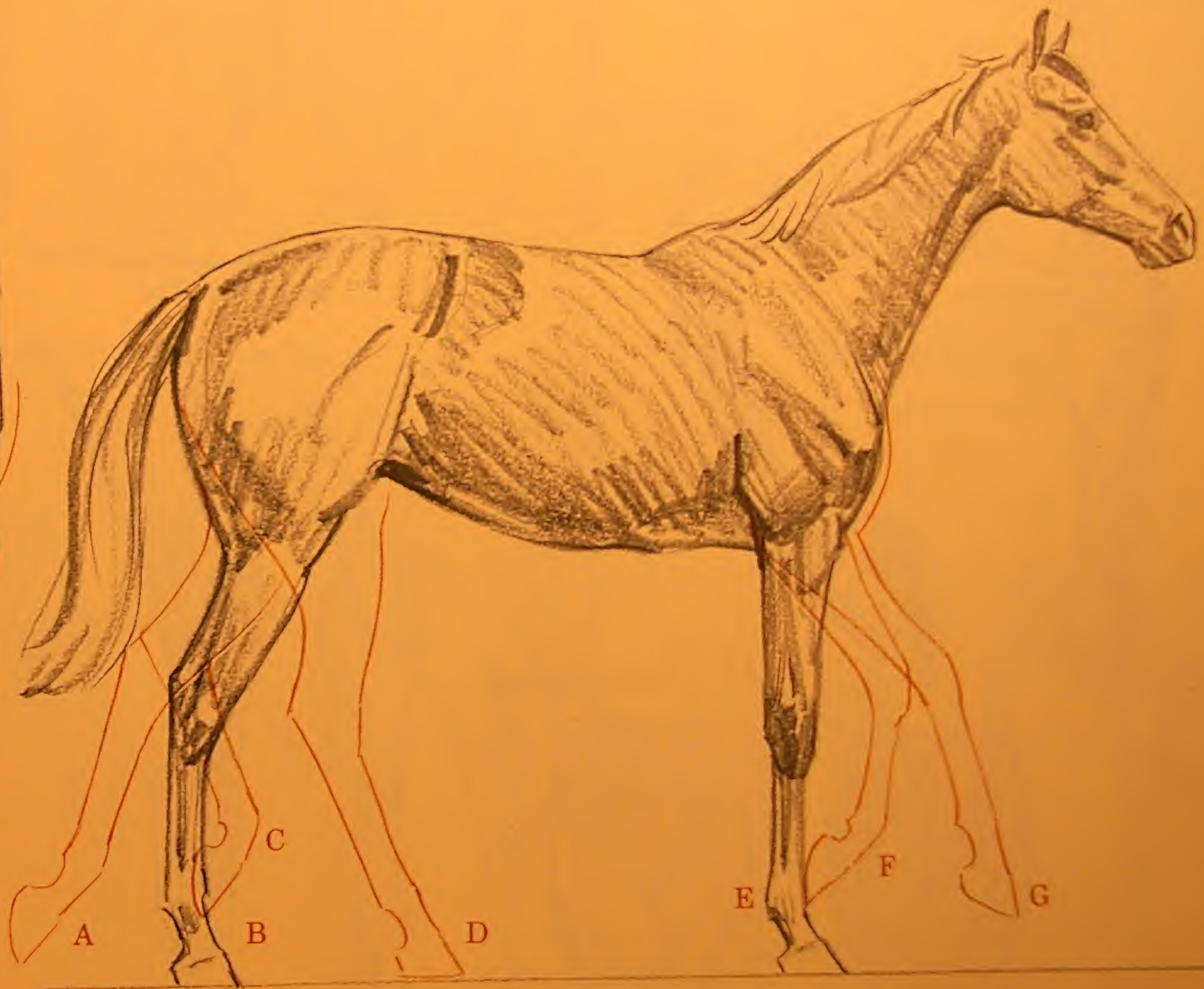
The legs and all their parts must be drawn clearly and sharply. This is important because any line not clearly drawn may be misread as a fault in their structure.



Note the bulging forearms and knock-kneed appearance of the front legs.



Note the outward bulge of the hindquarters and gaskins and the perpendicular straightness of the cannon bones.

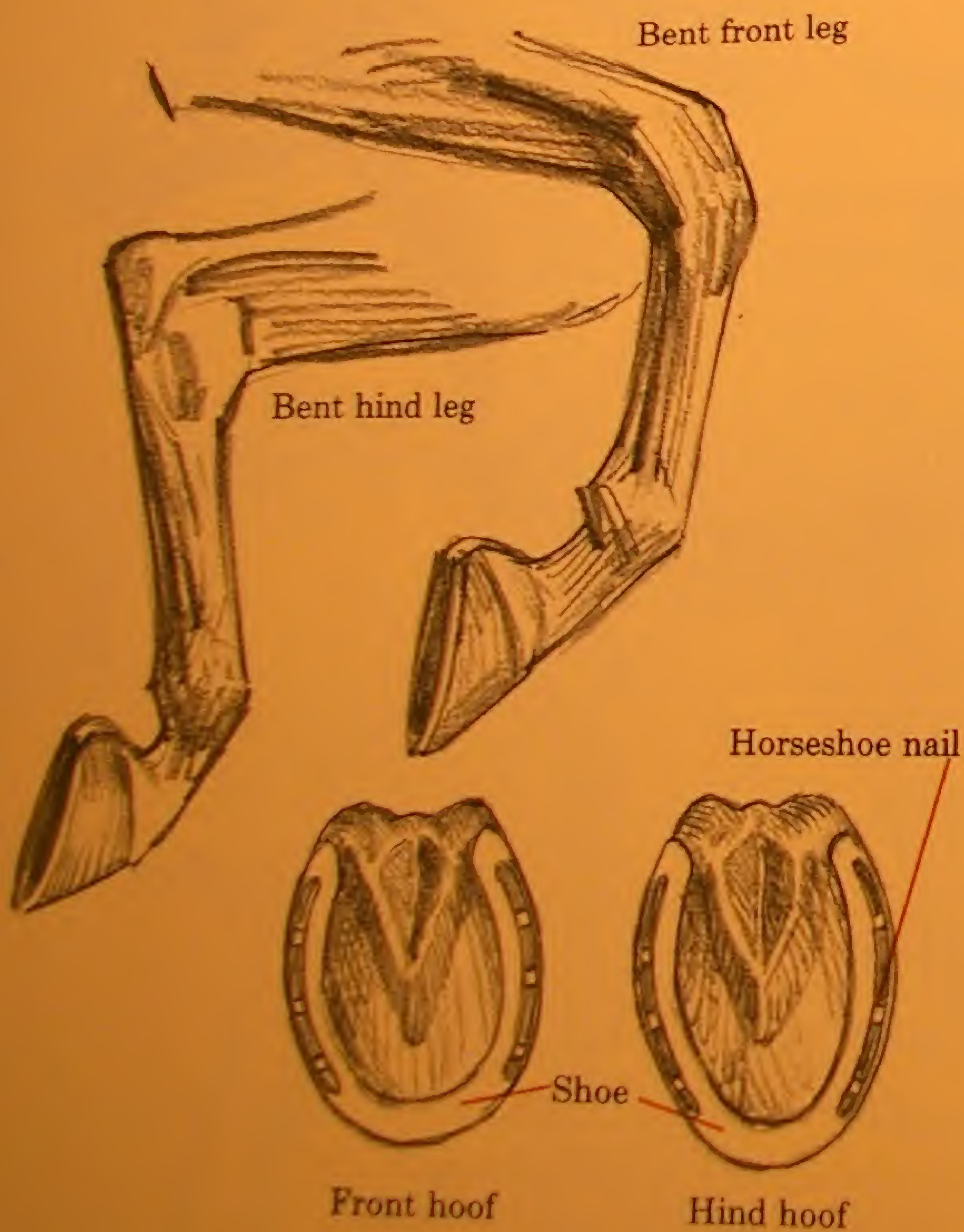


When a leg moves, the structure to which it is attached also moves. See how the hoof in B and E snaps downward as the leg moves forward and backward. Also notice how the angle of the pastern (A through G) changes as the horse moves.

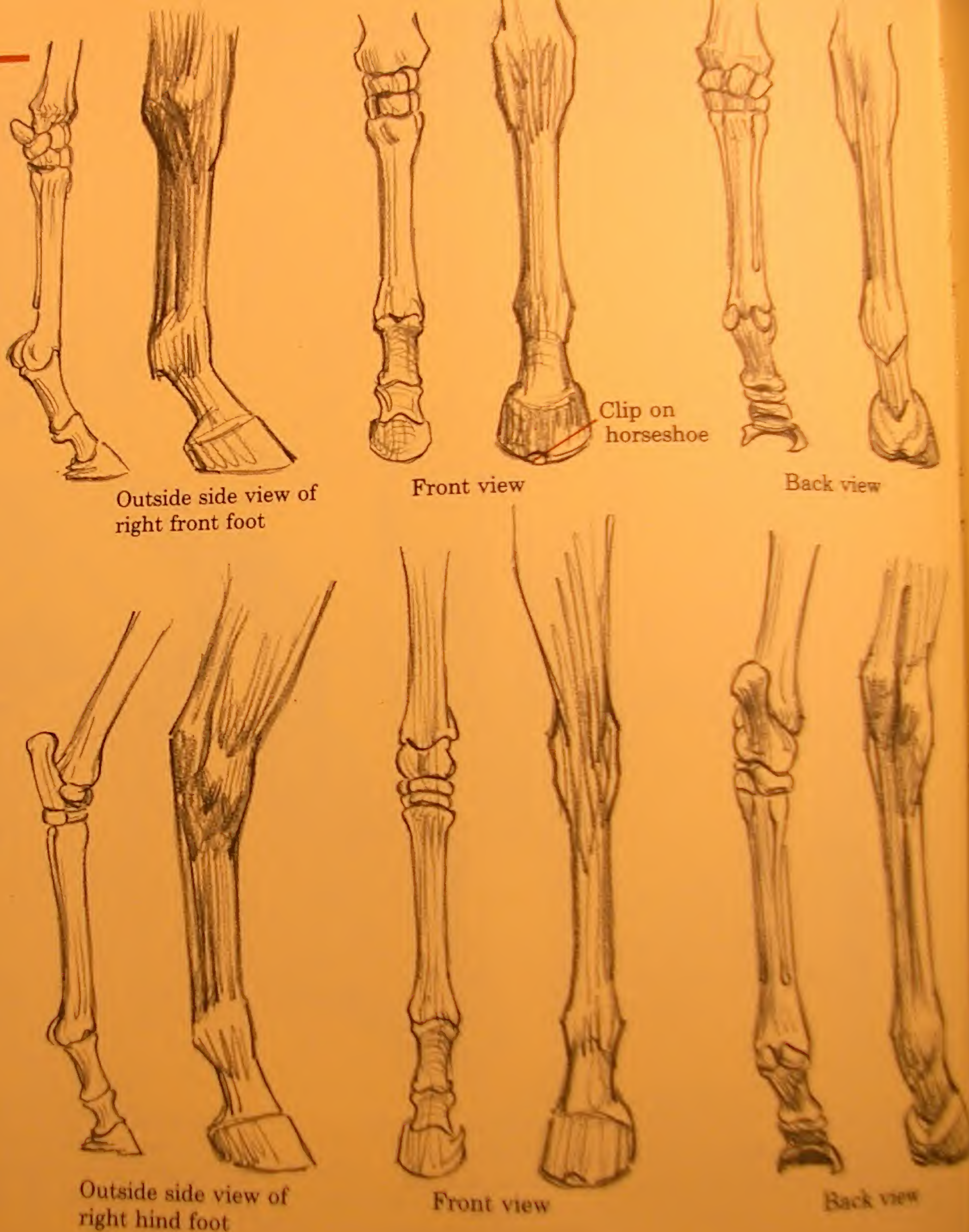


## The Feet

A horseman appraises the horse from the ground up, for, as the saying goes, "No foot, no horse." Many beginning artists make the mistake of ignoring details in drawing feet, burying the feet in the grass. But you must know what a foot really looks like before you can even suggest it correctly. Here I have shown the legs and hoofs and the bone structure inside them.



Notice that the front hoof is slightly wider than the hind hoof.







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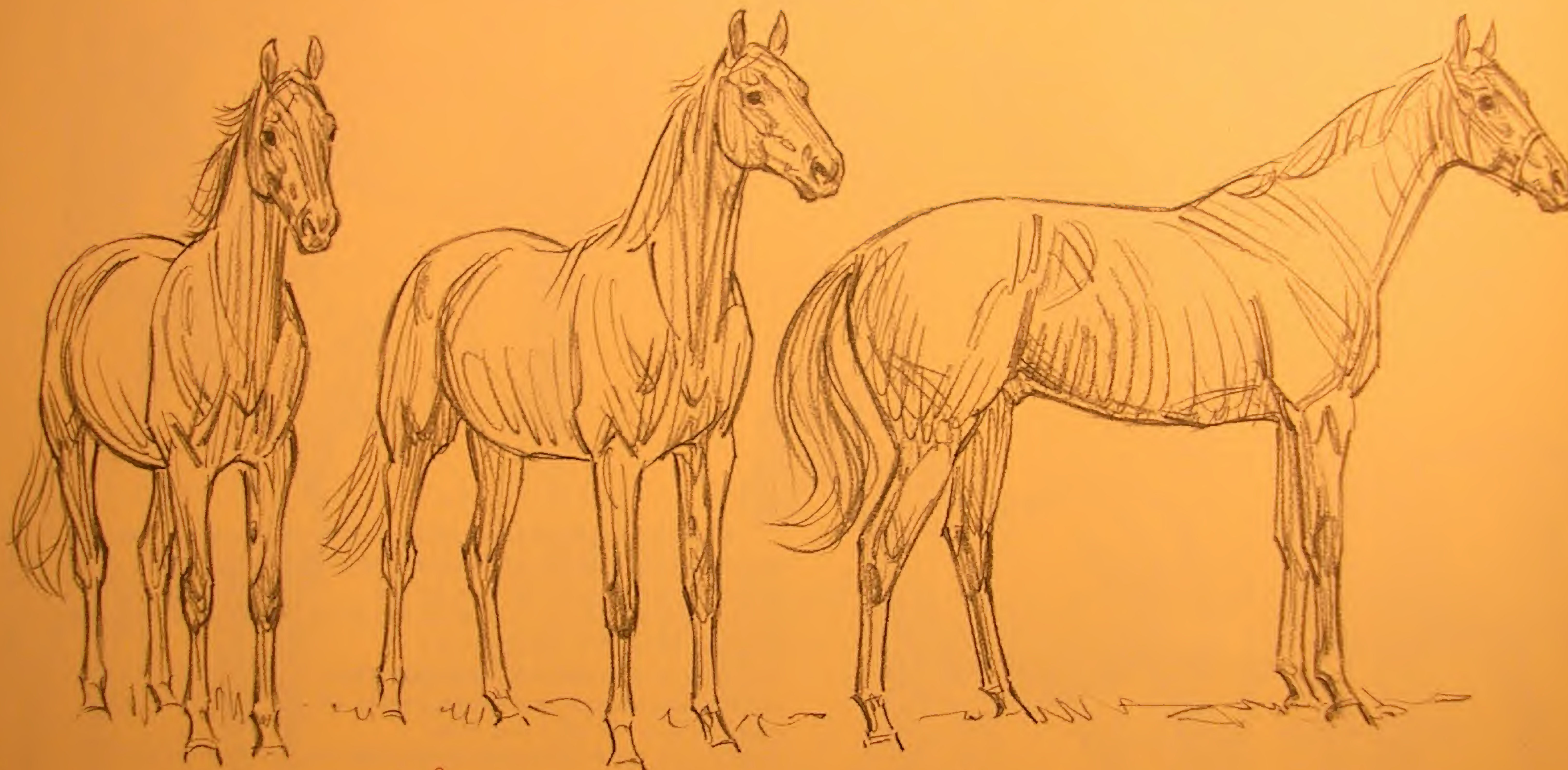


7

Moving around the front legs



Looking at the whole horse from different angles is a good exercise in seeing. Be especially aware of how individual parts relate to each other.



1

As you approach the horse from the front, be aware of how the neck joins the shoulder and how the shoulder fits into the barrel, which in turn connects with the hindquarters.

2

As you go by his right side, you will begin to see more barrel and more of the hindquarters. The shape of the legs will not change much until you are alongside them.

3

From this angle, the legs look quite different. Now you can observe the true relationships between the parts of the horse, undistorted by foreshortening. This is why conformation portraits always show the horse in this position.





4

As you go toward the rear of the horse, you will begin to see him in an entirely different perspective. Notice how the parts fit together from this angle, especially the legs.



5

The horse doesn't bother to turn his head since his eyes are on the side of his head and he can still see you well enough from this angle.



6

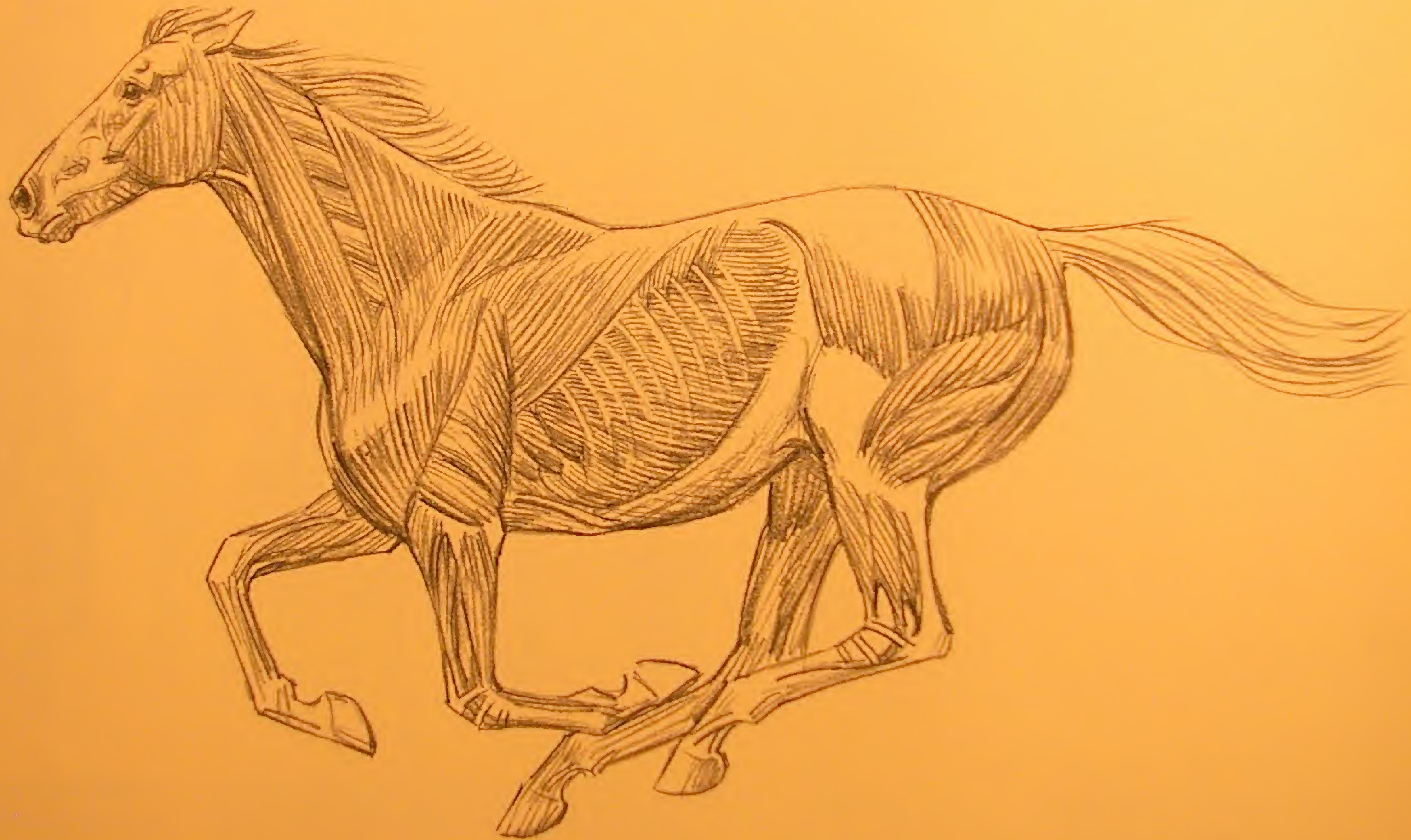
Now the horse turns to make sure you are still watching him. Did you watch closely? Did you notice that I put a halter on the head of the horse in fig. 3? I also make my horses switch their tails occasionally to give my drawings more interest. I ruffled this horse's mane for the same reason.



## 2 / THE HORSE IN MOTION

---

Now that we have had a good look at the horse standing still, let's see what happens when he goes into action. The most important thing to remember is that all parts of the horse are connected by bone and sinew and that the movement of one part always influences the parts that adjoin it. Although the basic construction of each part we studied in chapter 1 does not change, the relationships between the parts will vary each time the horse moves and each time we view him from a different angle.



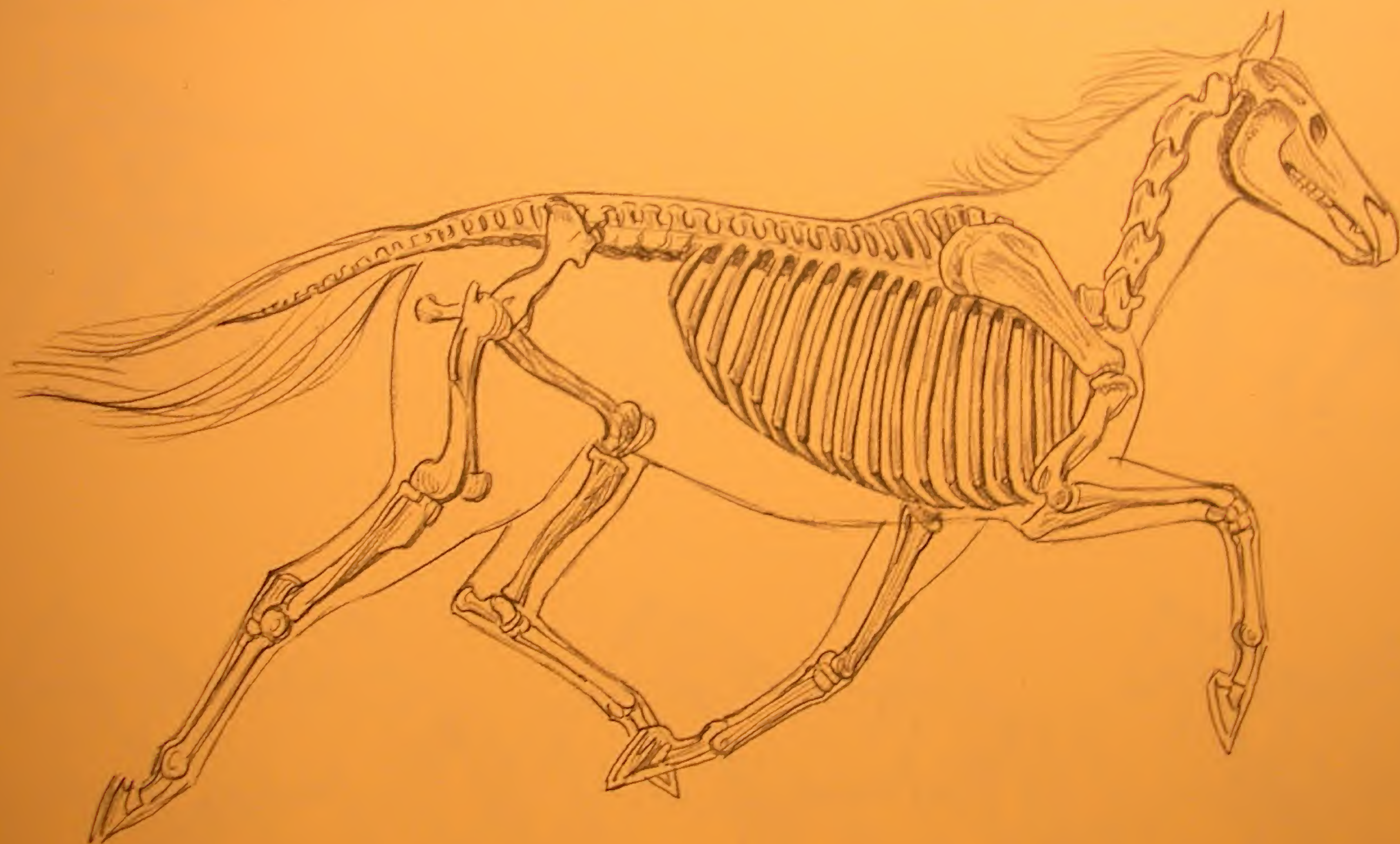
### MUSCULAR SYSTEM IN A GALLOPING HORSE

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See page 9 for the names of important muscular groups.



When you begin to make an action drawing, try to feel the horse's movement within yourself as you draw. The various gaits have a rhythm of their own. The jump is smooth and graceful, while the buck is erratic and jerky. Each person will experience the action in his own way. But first you should understand the underlying structure and how it is affected by movement.



### SKELETAL STRUCTURE IN A TROTTING HORSE

Refer to page 8 for the names of bones and compare the two drawings to see how action has affected their position.

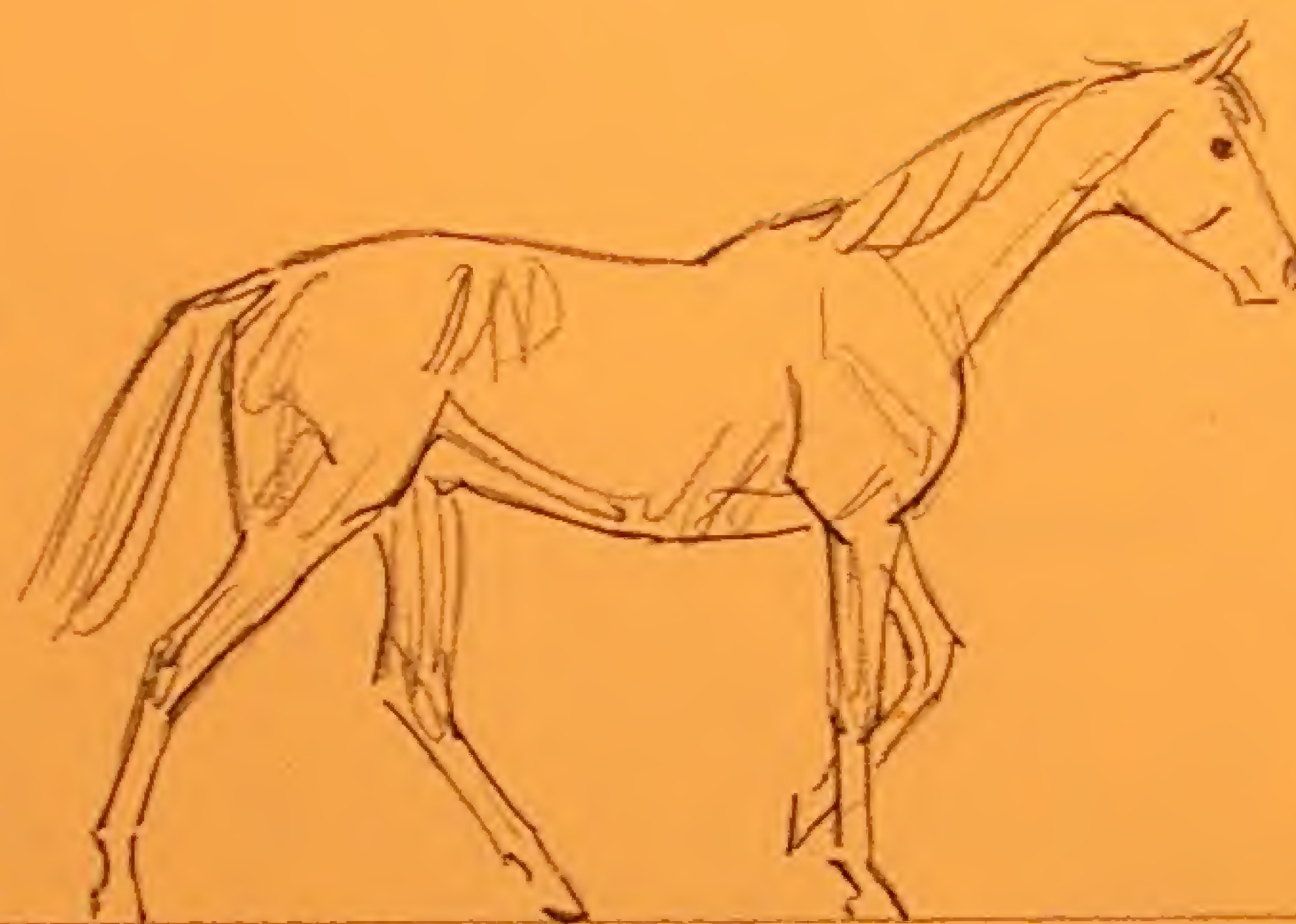


## THE WALK

The horse's walk is a diagonal action; that is, when the left front foot begins to leave the ground, the right hind foot will follow (figs. 1-6), and the same is true of the right forefoot and the left hind (figs. 9-12). Notice that as the leg moves, the entire section of shoulder to which it is attached also moves. Figs. 4, 5, and 6 show the left shoulder moving forward with the left foreleg. Figs. 9-12 show the right shoulder swinging forward with the right foreleg. This rule also applies to the hindquarters.



1



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8



9



Different horses carry their heads differently when they walk. Some carry them high, others low. The horse in this walking sequence carries his head pretty much in the middle. The length of the stride will also vary from horse to horse. Generally, the taller the horse, the longer the stride, although I have known small horses with long strides and tall horses with relatively short strides. The next time you have the opportunity to watch horses in motion, be sure to make note of these individual variations.



4



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11



12





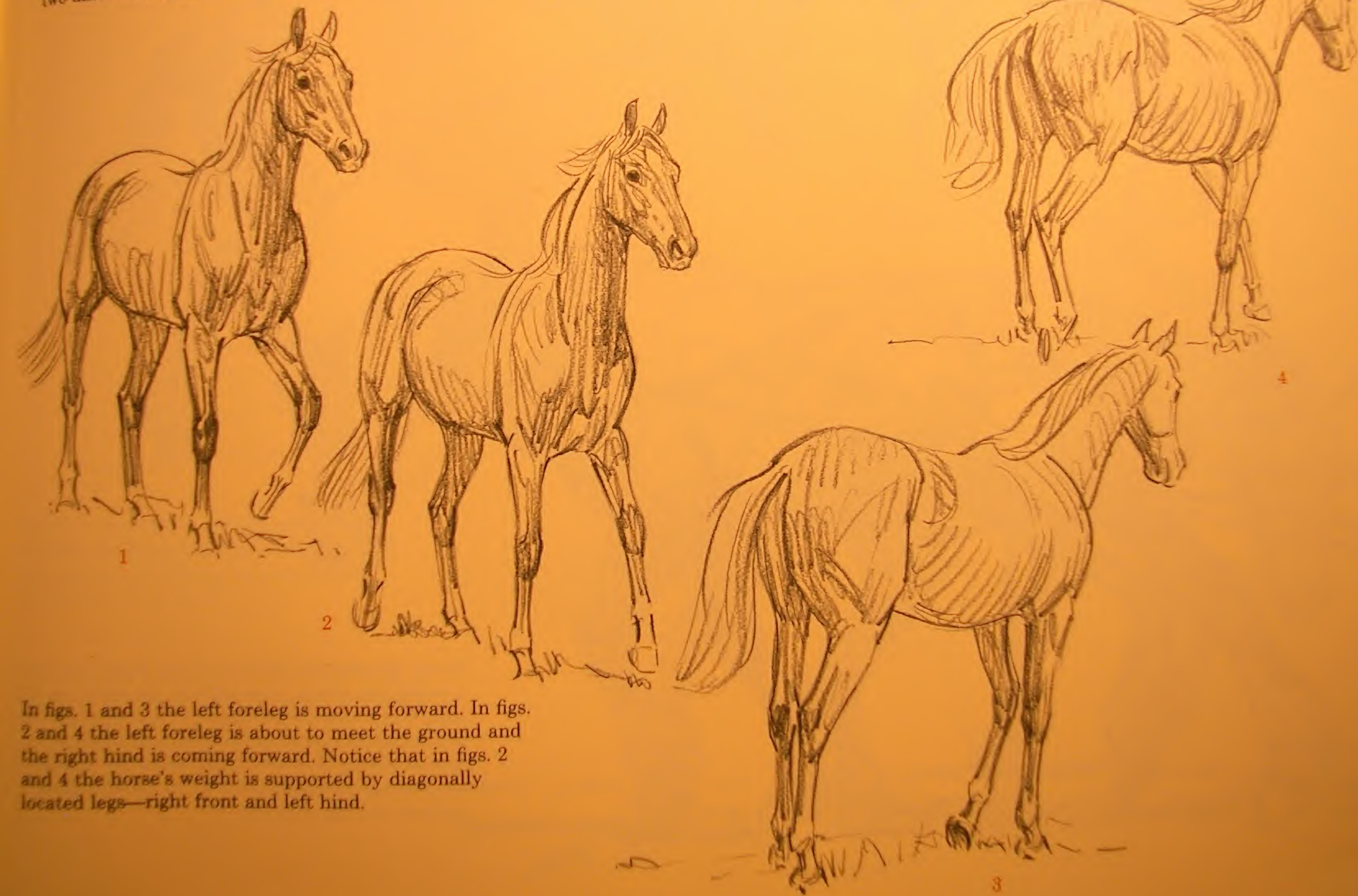
While walking uphill, the horse pushes forward—leaning a little into the hillside. Going downhill, however, he braces himself and moves more carefully with almost mincing steps, keeping his weight back.

The American Saddle Horse (right) has a high-stepping walk all his own.



On this page you can study the horse coming and going at a walk.

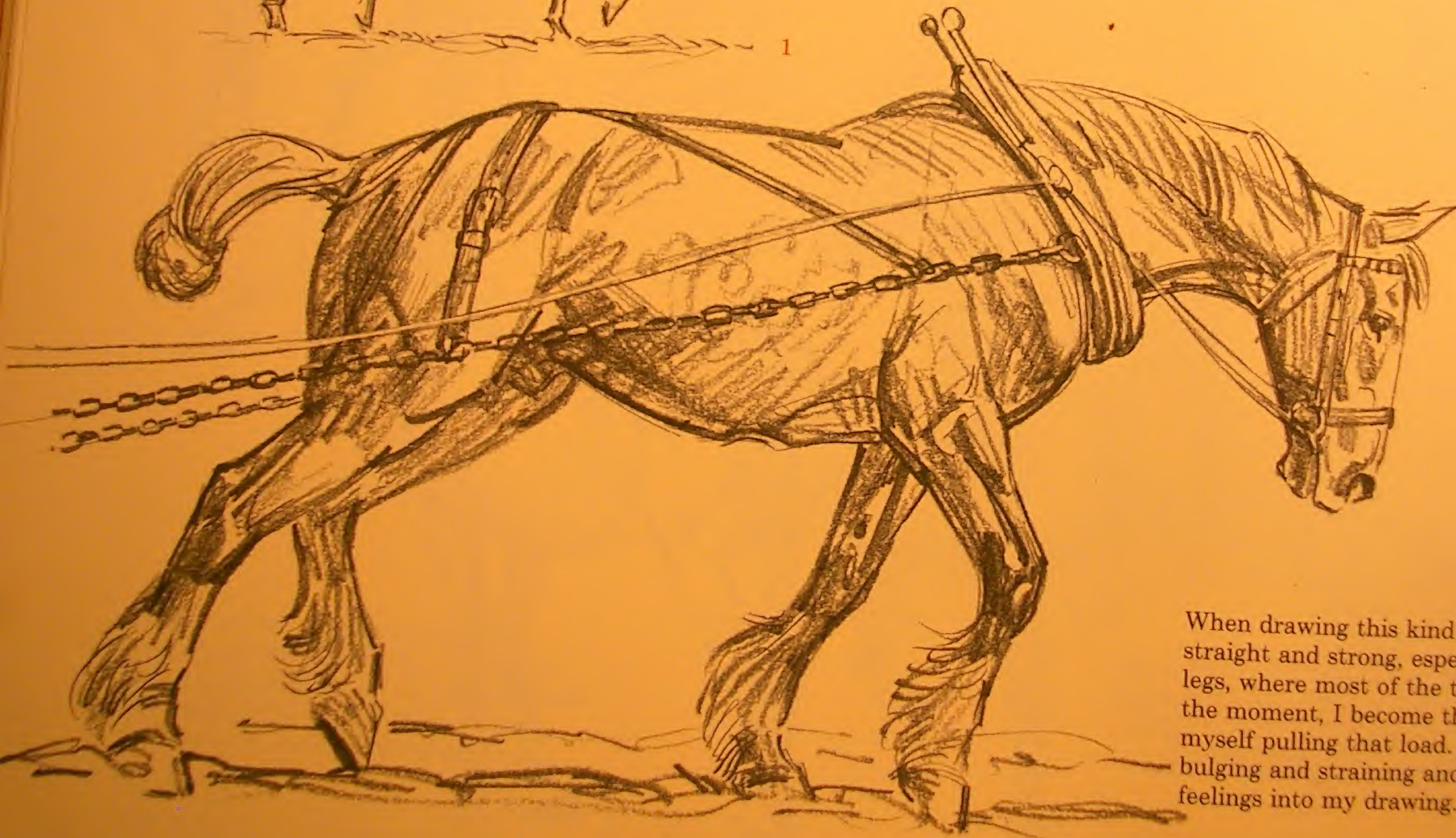
In fig. 1 the horse walking toward you is in the same part of the stride as the horse in fig. 3 walking away from you. Figs. 2 and 4 also show the same stride from two different angles.



In figs. 1 and 3 the left foreleg is moving forward. In figs. 2 and 4 the left foreleg is about to meet the ground and the right hind is coming forward. Notice that in figs. 2 and 4 the horse's weight is supported by diagonally located legs—right front and left hind.



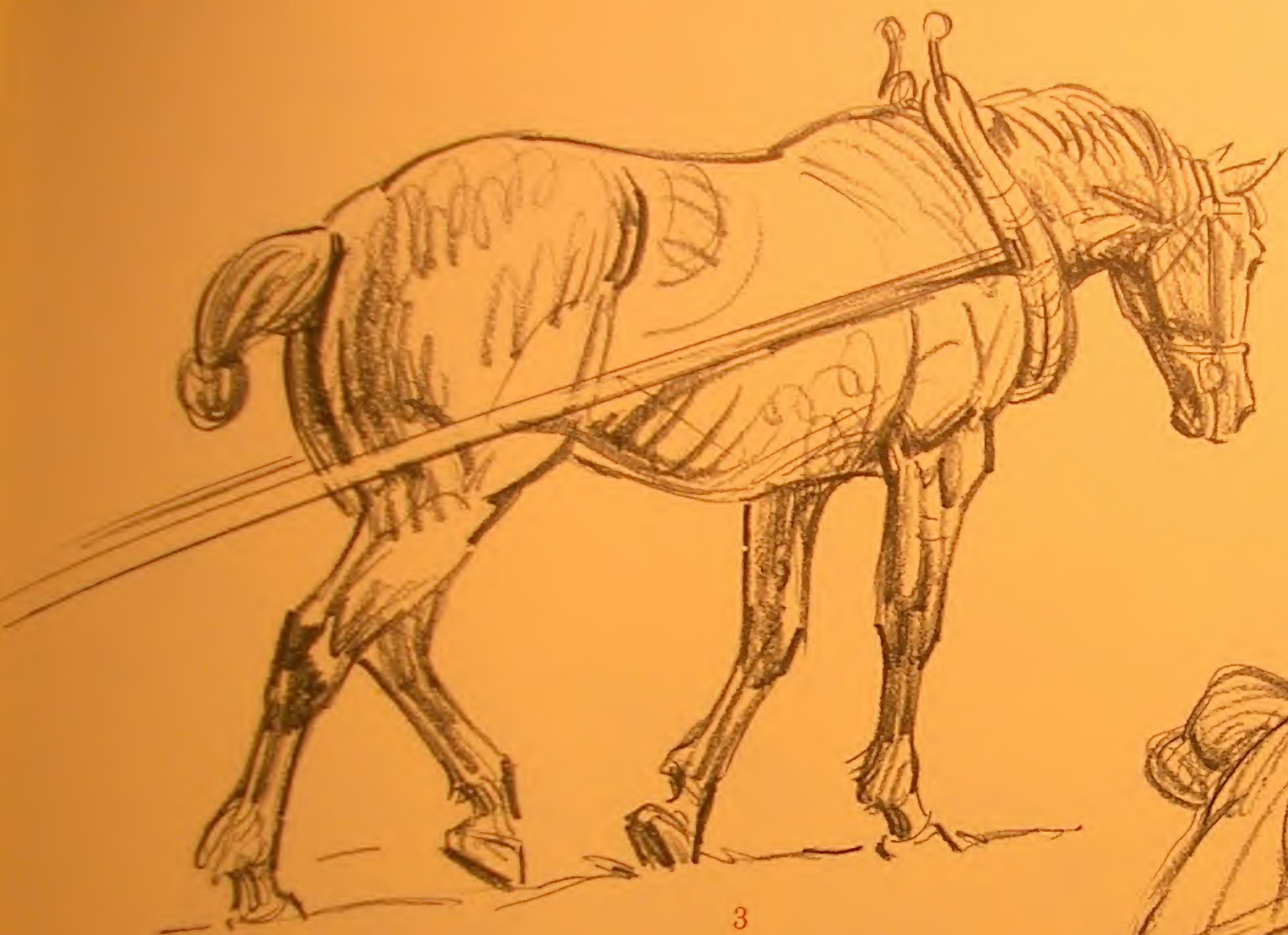
Figs. 1 and 2 are drawn in the same part of the stride, but the draft horse (fig. 2) is pulling a heavy load. His stride is shorter than that of fig. 1 because he is digging in, pushing against the collar with his head lowered and leaning his whole body into the job.



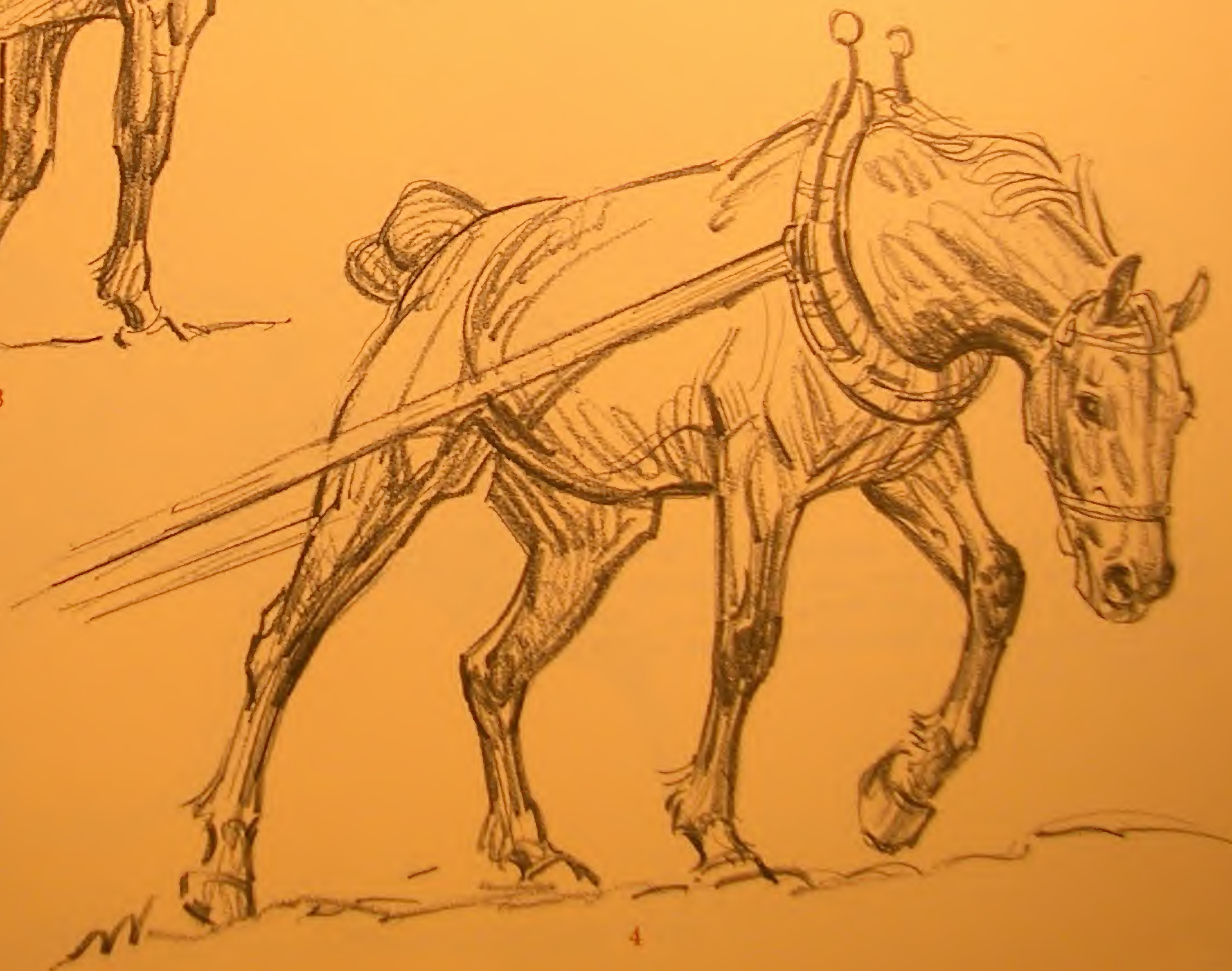
When drawing this kind of action, I keep my lines straight and strong, especially in the back and the legs, where most of the thrust is coming from. For the moment, I become the horse and imagine myself pulling that load. I can sense my muscles bulging and straining and I try to transfer these feelings into my drawing.



The horse in fig. 4 is bearing down once again as he pulls up the hill. I have lowered his head and distended his nostrils in order to help give an impression of strain and effort. Notice that his stride is a bit more advanced than in fig. 3.



In fig. 3 the horse is pulling, but he is already under way and is therefore not pressing as hard as he was when he started out in fig. 2.

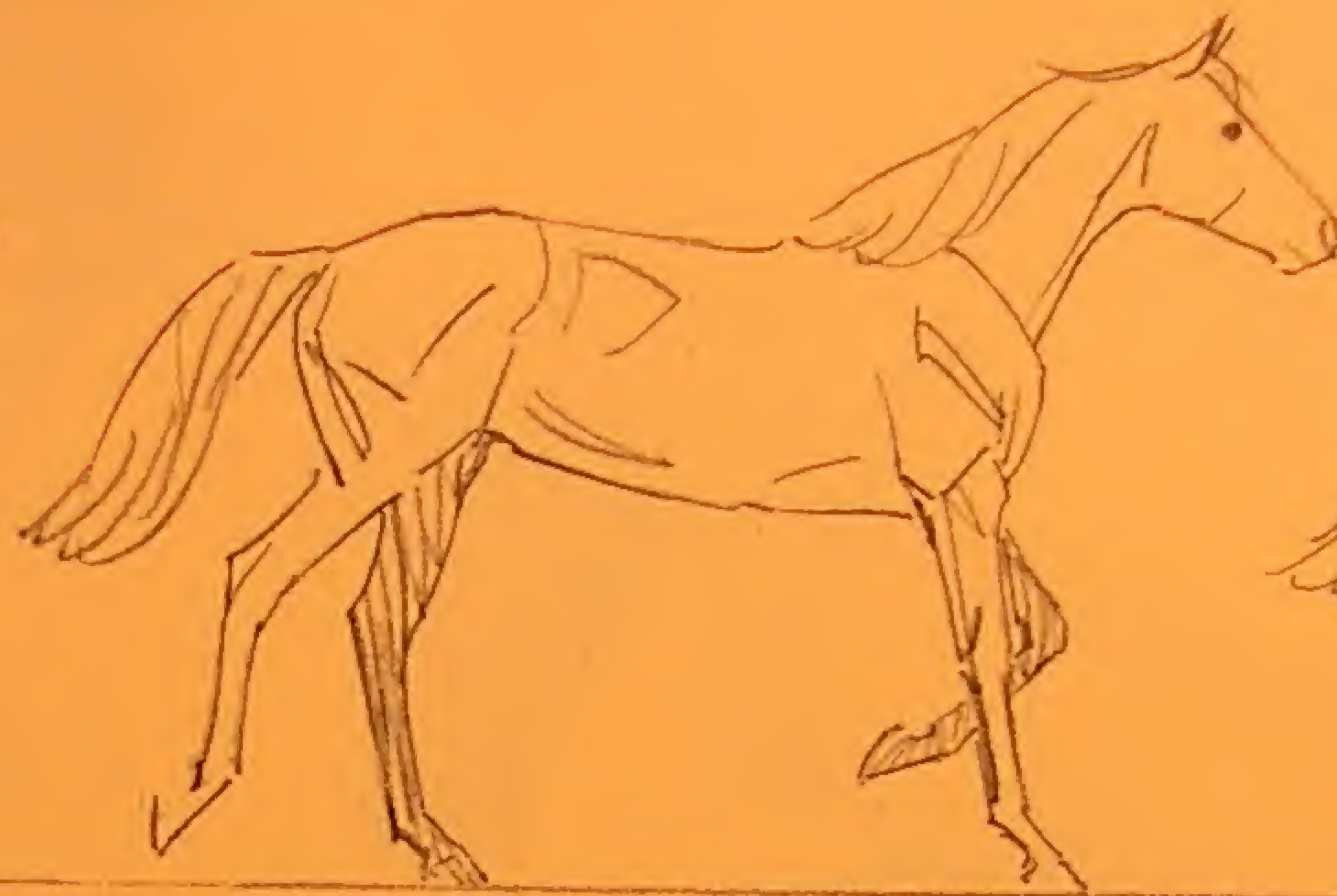




## THE TROT



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6

The trot, like the walk, is a diagonal action. The stride is measured from the spot where one foot leaves the ground to the point where it touches again. Notice that when a horse is trotting, there are times when all four feet are off the ground at once (figs. 1, 5, 9).

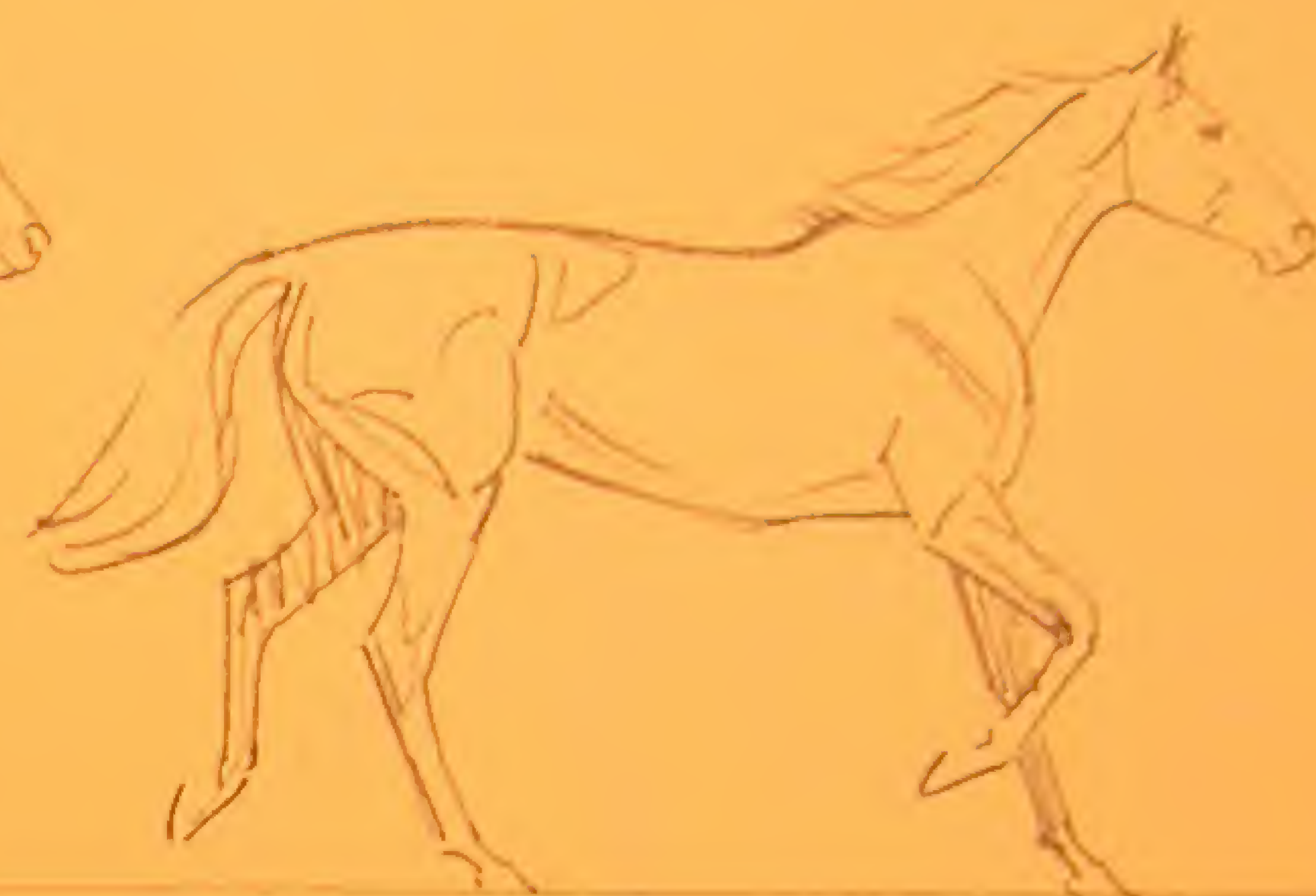




4



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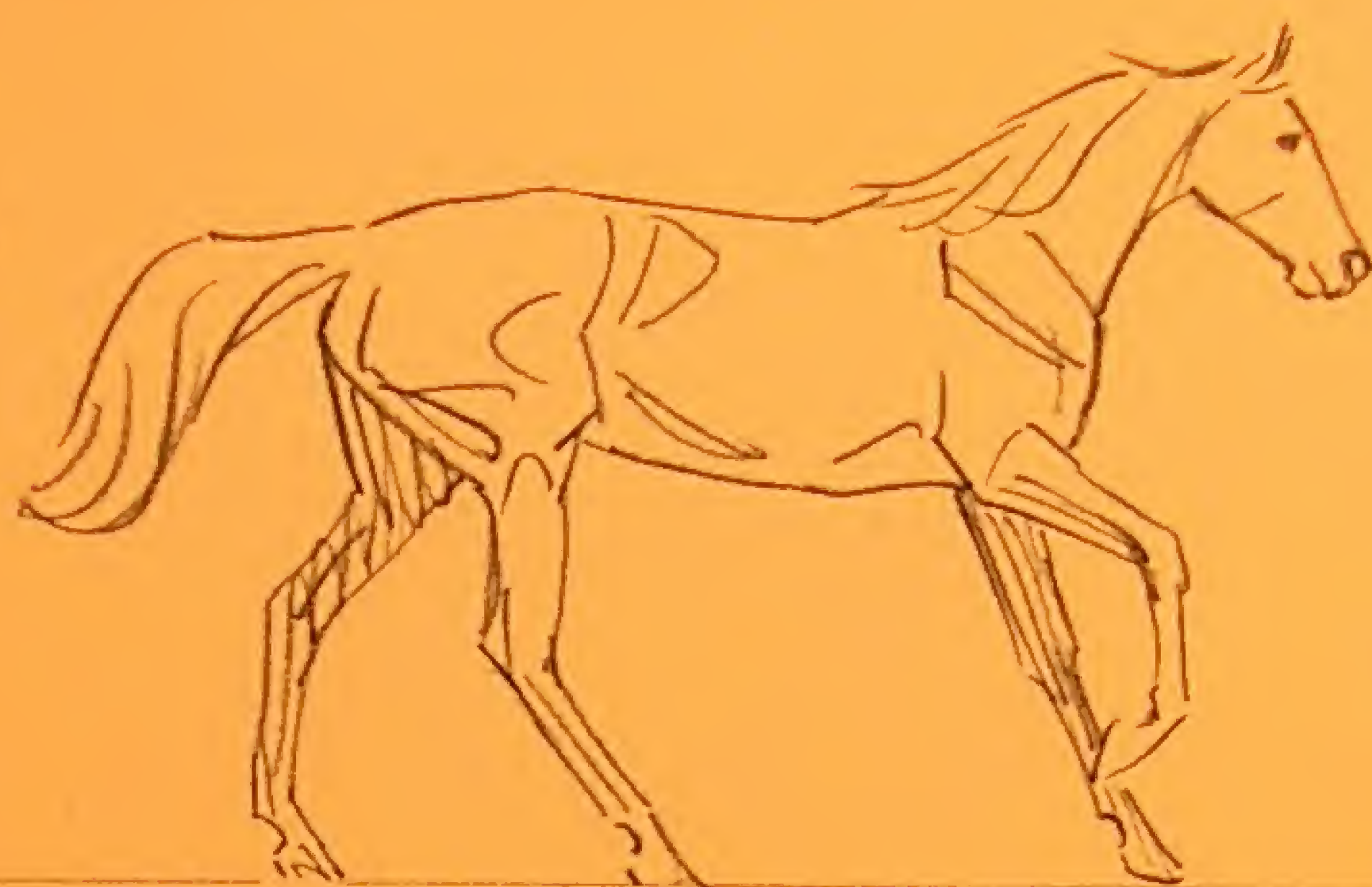
In the drawing at the left, the horse has lengthened his stride. The stride of a medium-sized trotting horse might measure about seven feet, but a racing trotter can cover eighteen to nineteen feet in a stride. Notice the extreme stretch of the forelegs and the devices I have used to give my drawing the feeling of action.



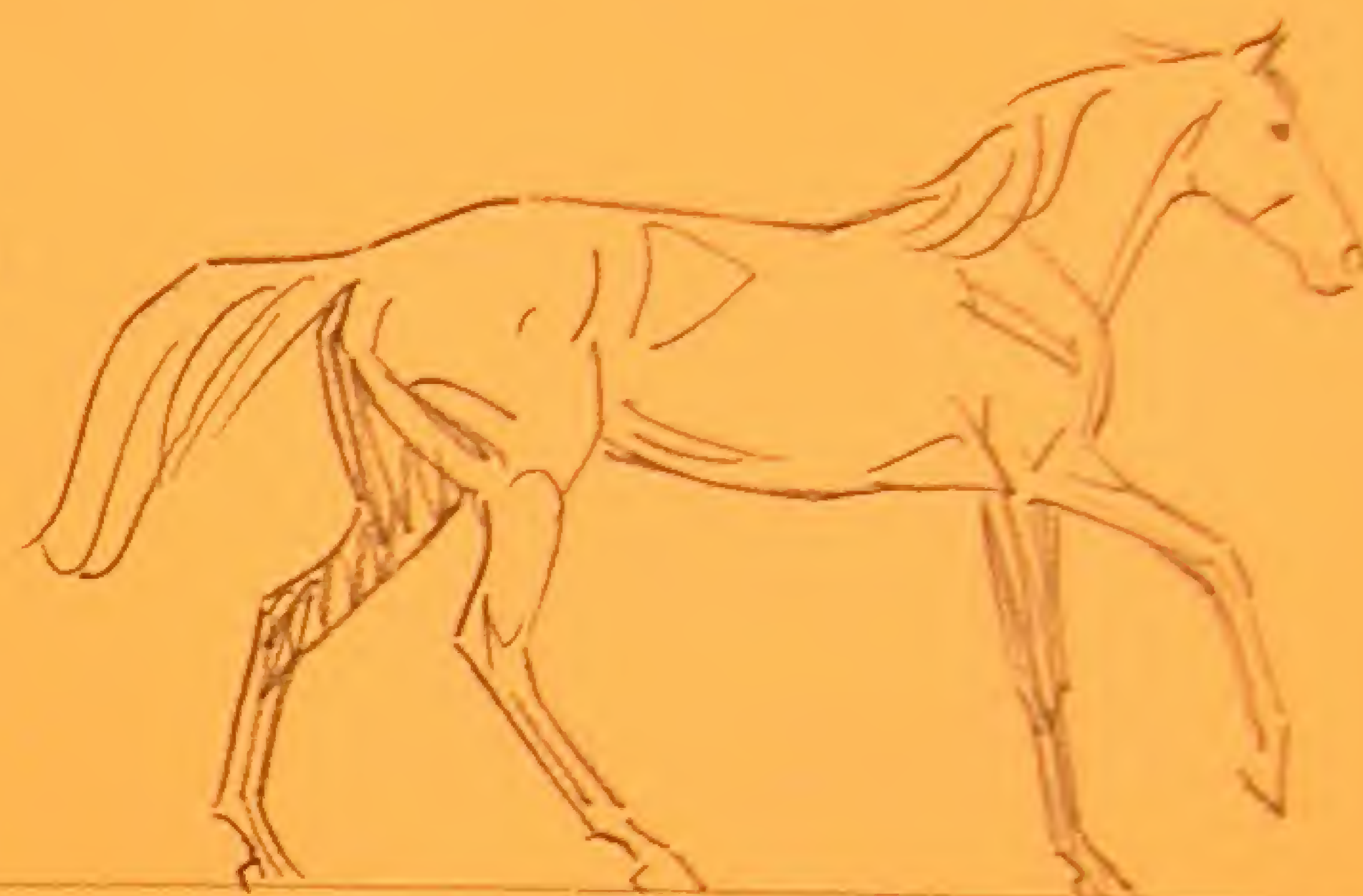
## THE CANTER



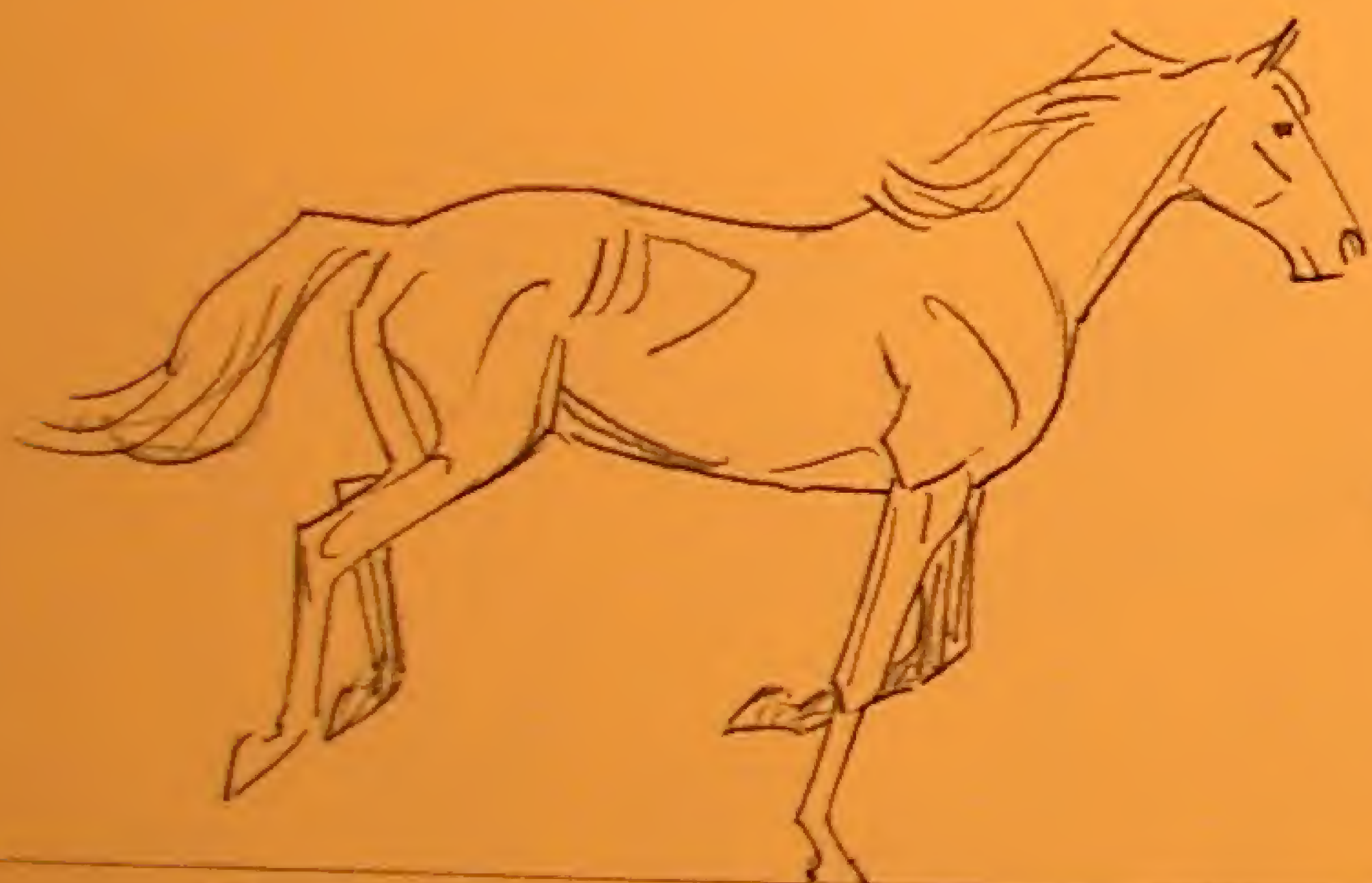
1



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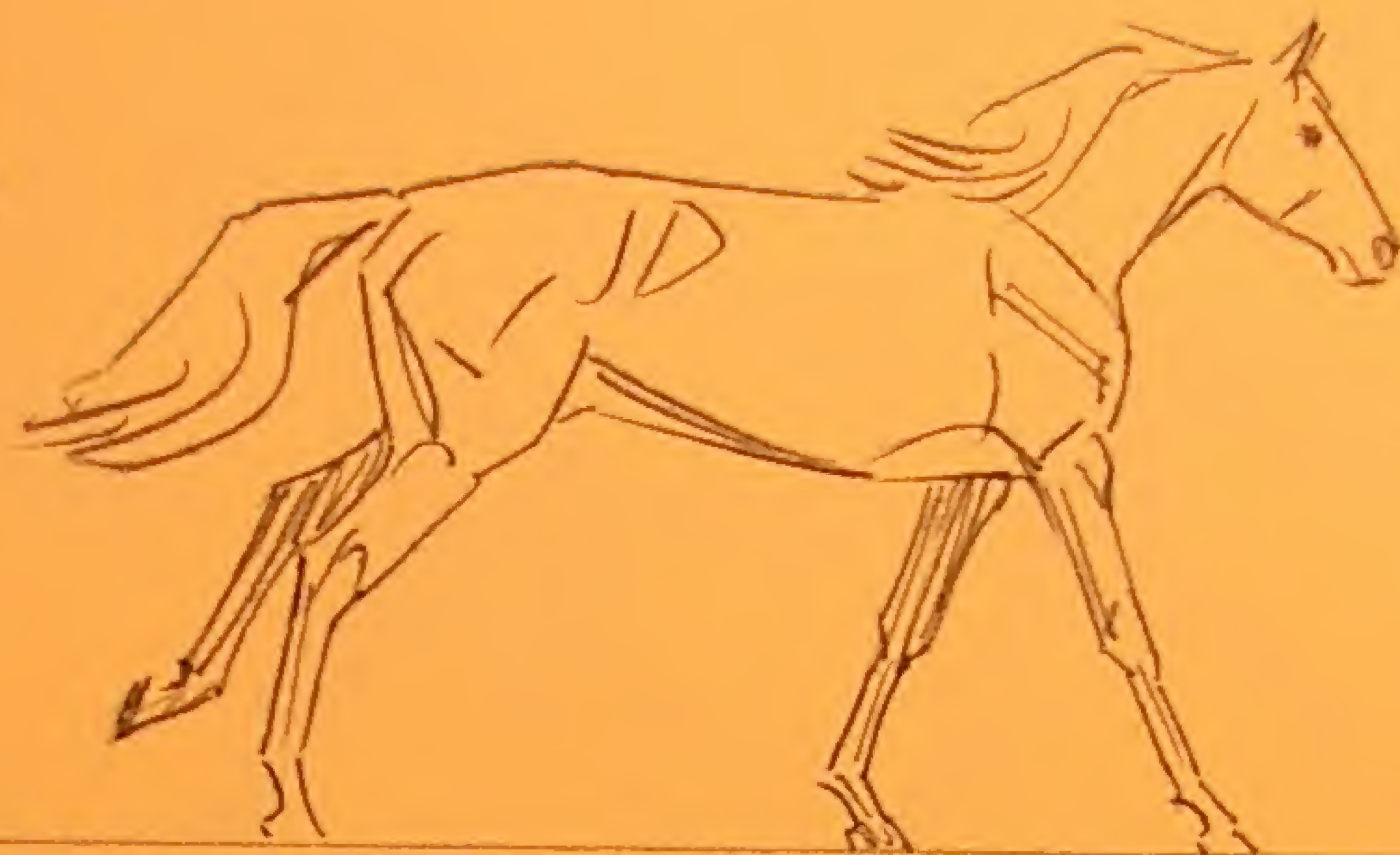
The canter is a collected version of the gallop. Unlike the faster gait, however, most of the movement of the horse is up and down rather than forward. It is a three-beat, easy-rolling gait. Try to feel that as you draw. Keep the ears pointed forward and the entire attitude of the horse both alert and relaxed.

Note that the horses in figs. 11 and 12, cantering toward you and away from you, are in the same part of the stride as the horses in figs. 1 and 10.





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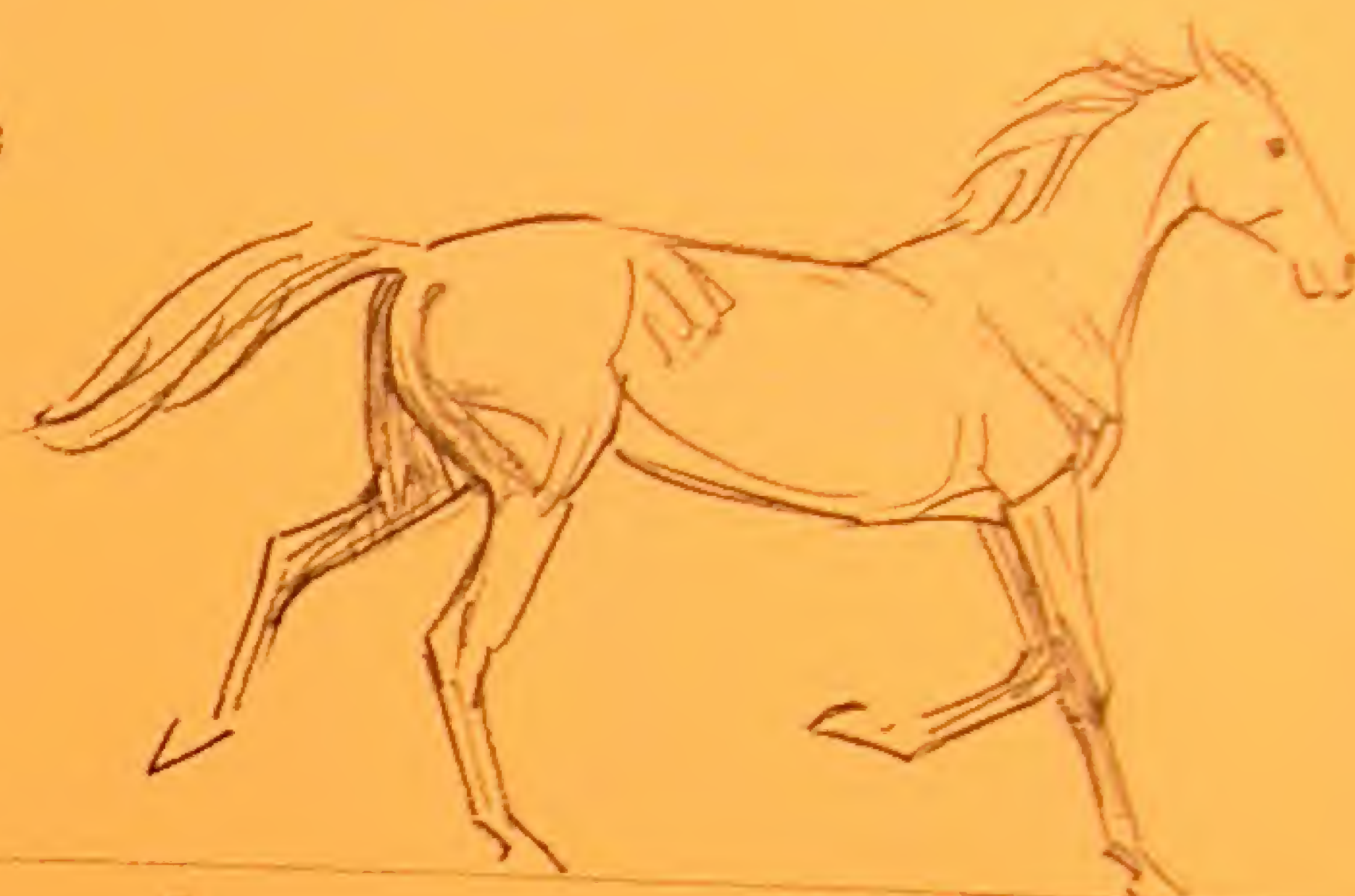




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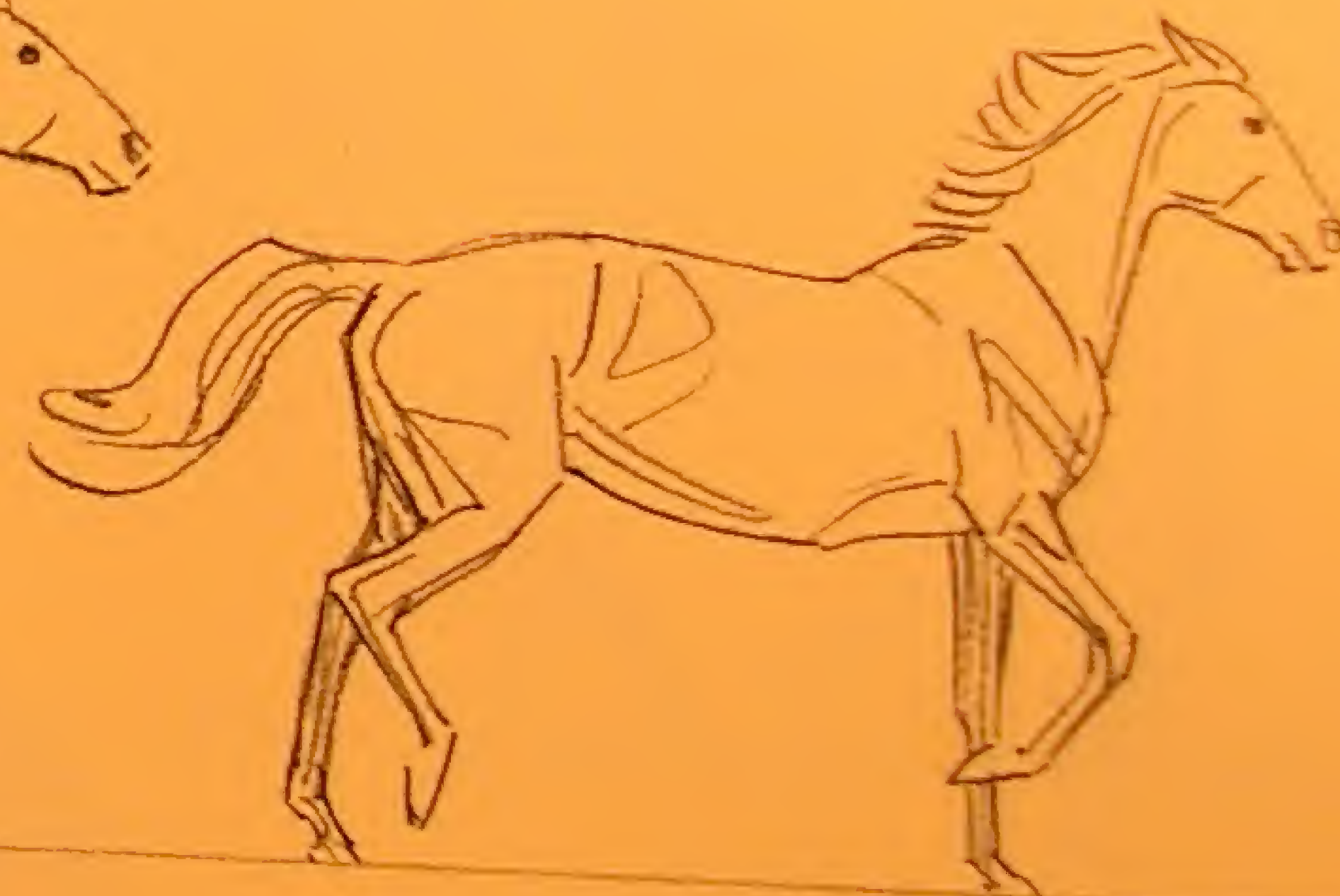
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The pace is a two-beat gait in which the lateral legs (those on the same side of the horse) move together. The fast or racing pace is often faster than the trot. This gait has a period of suspension (fig. 6) when four legs are off the ground.

Fig. 10 on the opposite page is pacing, while fig. 11 is trotting. Note that the pacing action is lateral, with the left front and left hind legs moving in the same direction at the same time. In the trotting horse, the leg action is diagonal, with the left hind and right front legs moving simultaneously.





4



5



6



10 Pacer



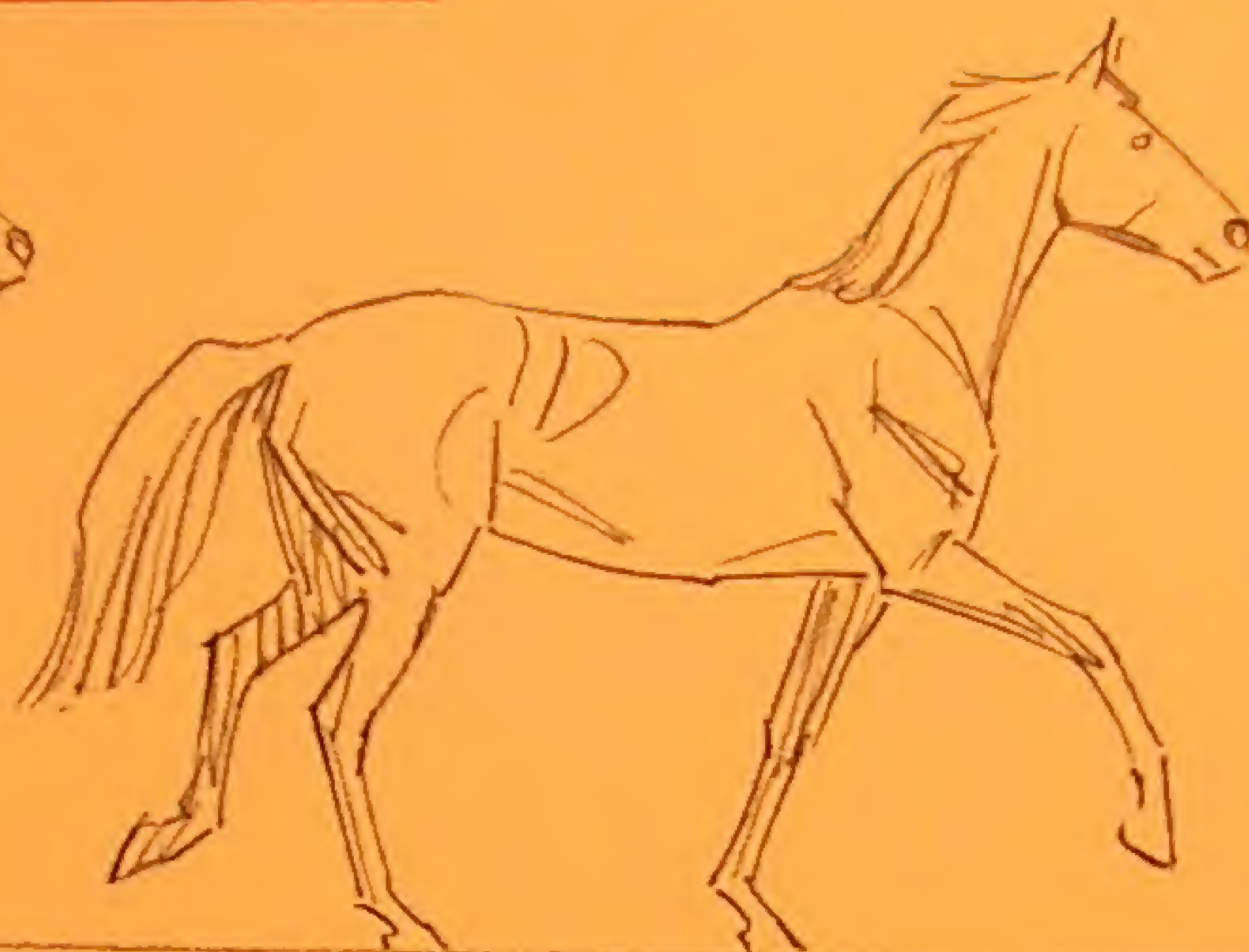
11 Trotter



## THE AMBLE



1



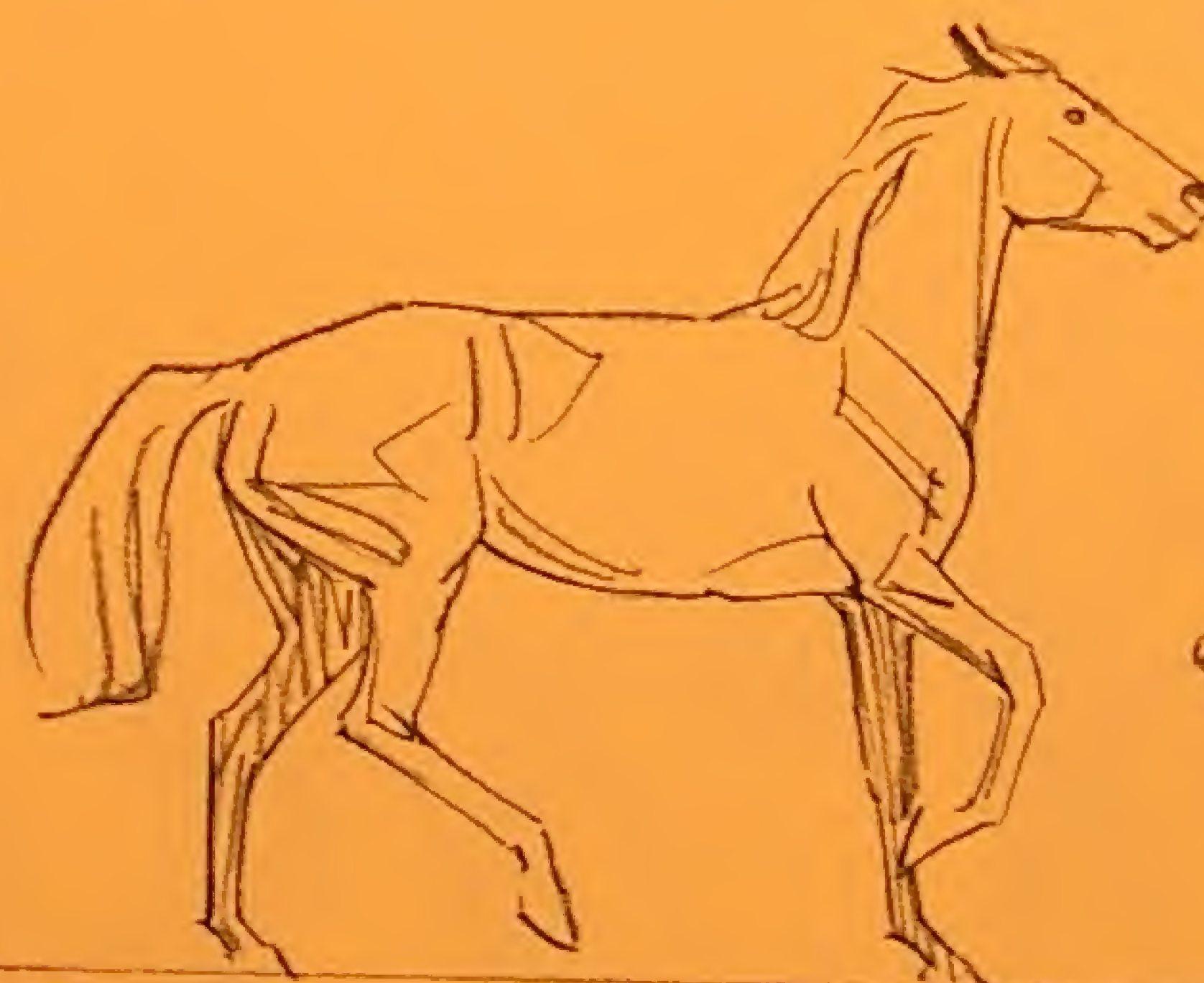
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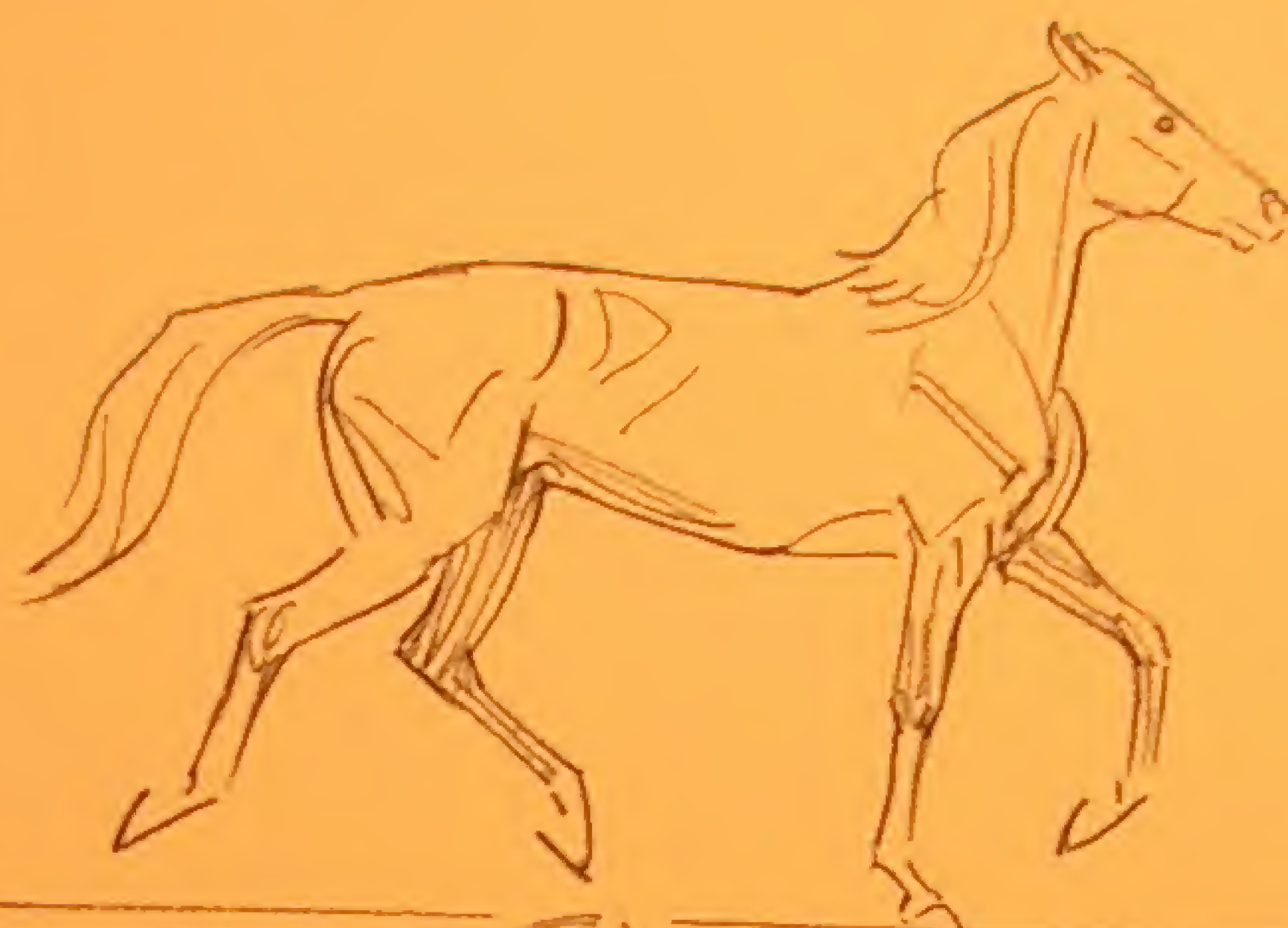
9

Like the pace, the amble (also called the slowgait or stepping pace) is a lateral-action gait, with both legs on the same side moving forward and backward together. This gait is also known as the singlefoot because it is a four-beat gait in which each foot strikes the ground separately in a smooth action with much elevation though no period of suspension, unlike the two-beat pace. A speeded-up version of the amble is called the rack; the amble and the rack form two of the five show gaits performed by five-gaited saddle horses.





4



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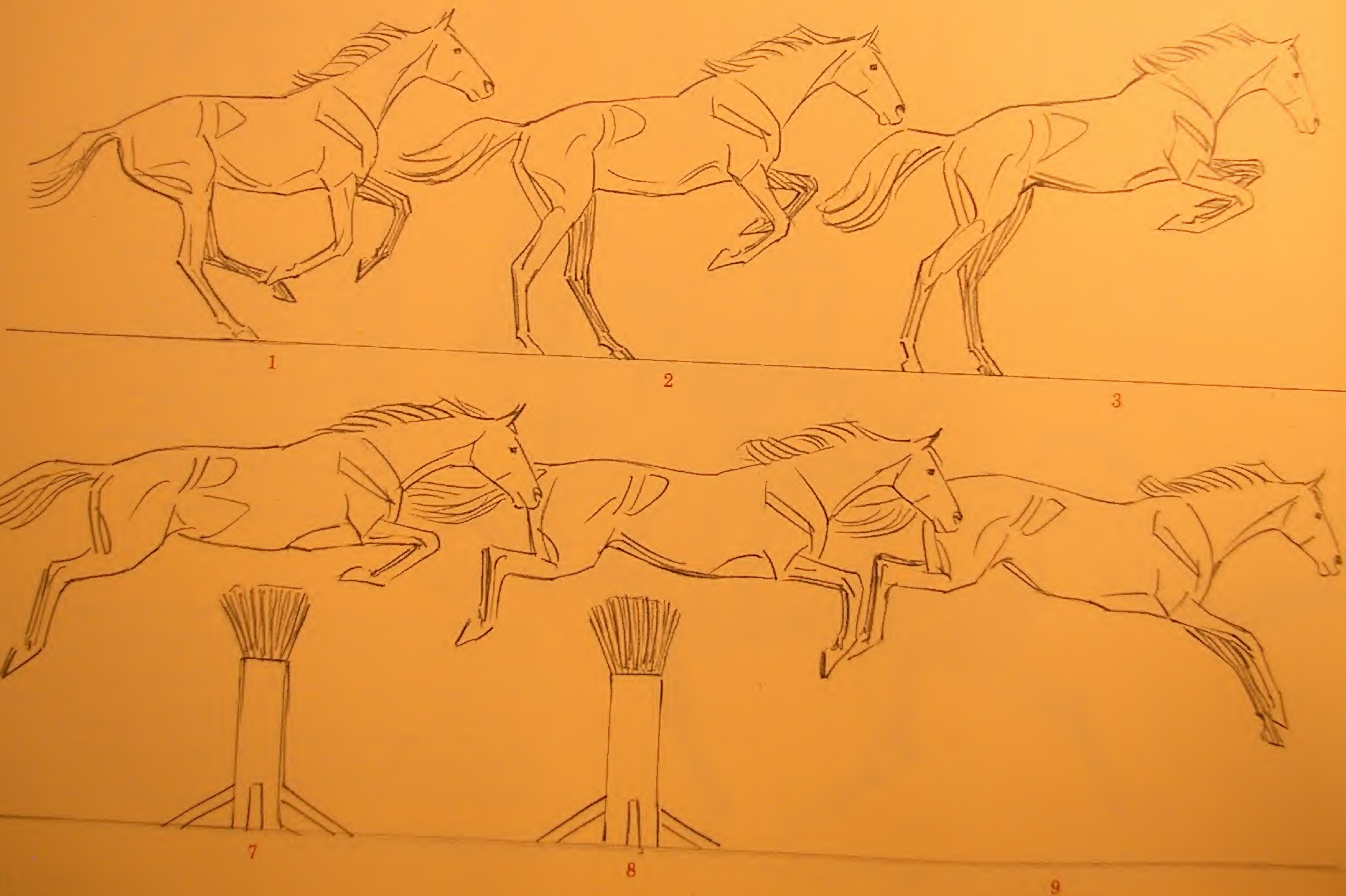


"Rack on!" This is the command given by the judge in the five-gaited saddle horse class. Fig. 10 is a drawing of Winged Commander, one of the greats of the American Saddle Horse breed. When this stallion racked on, he was high-spirited, fiery, and fiercely animated. Notice the free-flowing lines, which give a sense of excitement and movement to the drawing.



## THE JUMP

The sequence below follows a horse over an obstacle from the point of takeoff (fig. 1) to the landing (fig. 12). Notice that a good jumper will lower his head slightly as he leaves the ground. He will fold his forelegs as he crests the jump and then start opening them as he prepares to land. The hind legs will





fold in order to clear the jump and remain folded, for when the horse lands they must be ready to come in under him to maintain balance. Notice that one foreleg touches the ground a fraction before the other, which enables the horse to move on freely at the canter after the jump.



4

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6



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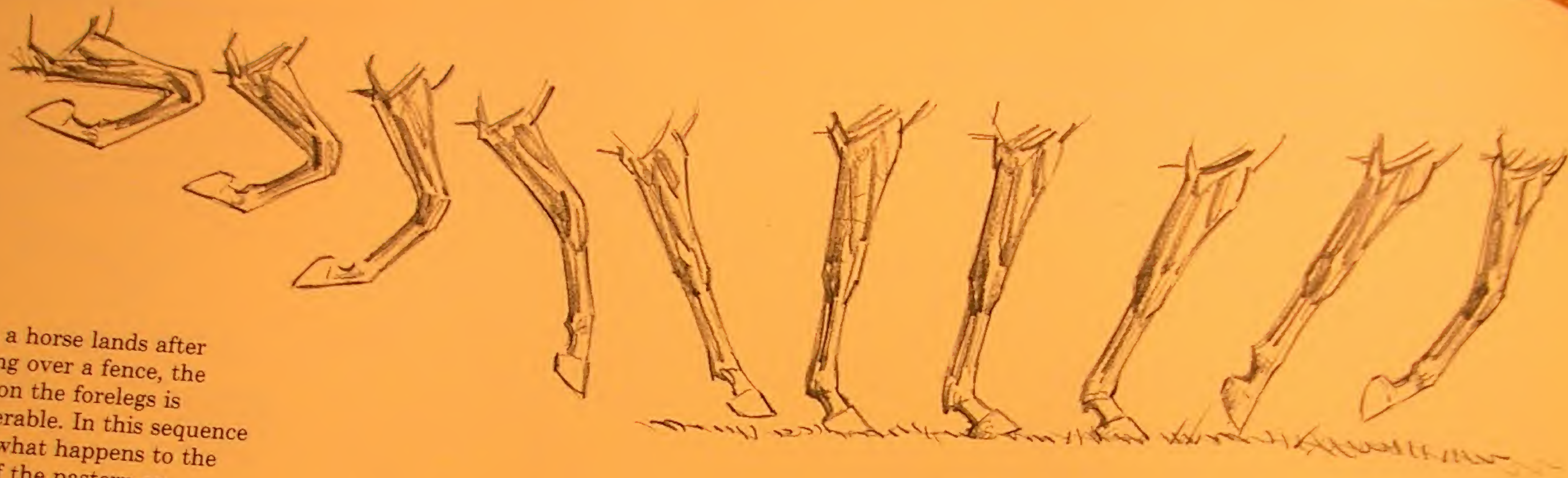
11

12

41



When a horse lands after jumping over a fence, the strain on the forelegs is considerable. In this sequence notice what happens to the angle of the pastern on impact.



Jumping uphill



Jumping downhill



When you study a still picture of a horse in action, try to visualize the motion that preceded that action and the motion that will follow. At all times be aware of the overlapping forms (see colored lines), which help give the drawing dimension.

In the horse jumping toward you, the hind legs have left the ground and the knees are coming up to clear the rails.



Note that in the horse jumping away from you the hind legs have not yet left the ground. At this point his knees are just beginning to rise. Compare this with the drawing at the left, which captures the motion a split second later.



## FALLING

In most falls the front end of the horse hits the ground first. Here is a steeplechaser going down after a fence. In this case the momentum of his fall turns him over completely. He twists slightly as he begins to go over and turns his muzzle to avoid slamming it into the ground.





Creating a sequence of this kind is a great exercise in logic. If I begin with a particular action drawing (fig. 1), the following action drawings must follow a logical pattern. What happens to the rider must be just as logical.





Horses fall down in different ways—some falls are funny, some not so funny. On the racetrack or steeplechase course, the falls are fast because of the momentum of the racing horses, and the riders are usually thrown clear.







In the hunting field or show ring, however, the falls are much slower and sometimes a rider can get tangled up in the mess.

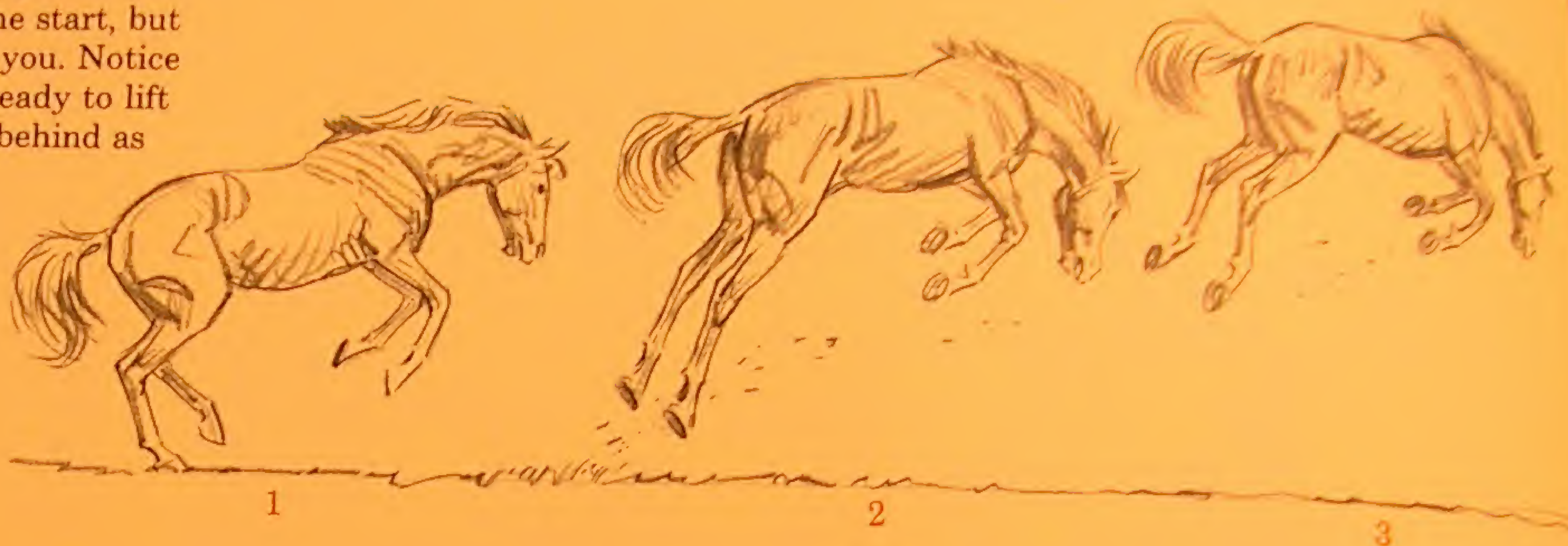
When drawing this kind of action, always make full use of whipping manes and tails and flying bits of equipment and turf to give your drawing more drama.





## BUCKING

A buck begins basically like a jump except that the horse will drop his head lower as he takes off (fig. 1). In this sequence the bucking horse is turned slightly away from you at the start, but in midair (fig. 4) he twists and lands coming toward you. Notice that as he hits the ground he begins turning again, ready to lift off in another direction. Also note how he kicks out behind as he lands.

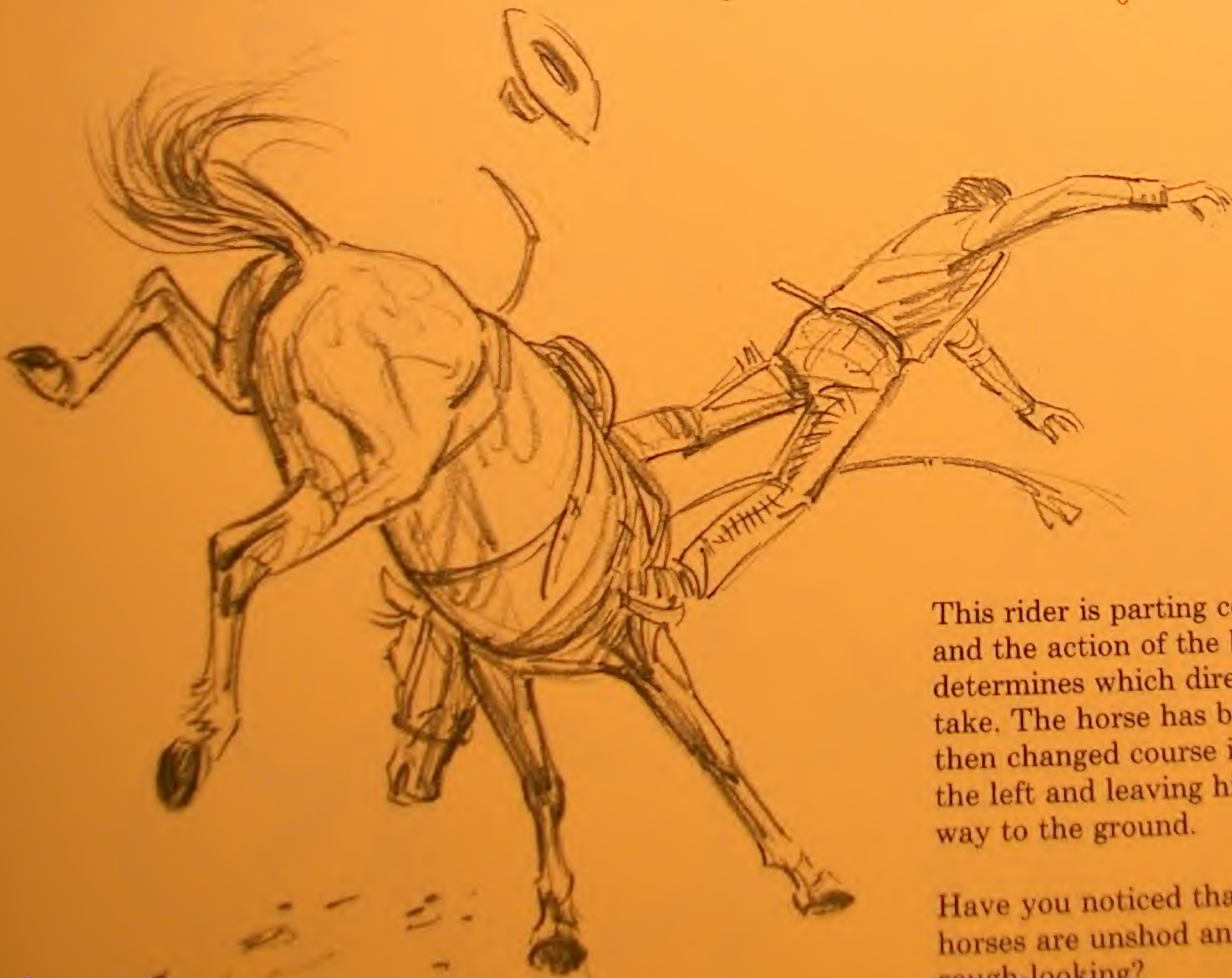


In drawing rodeo action, use quick, sharp lines to duplicate the violent motion of the horses. There is little shading. The solidity of the horses is attained by overlapping forms that fit into each other.



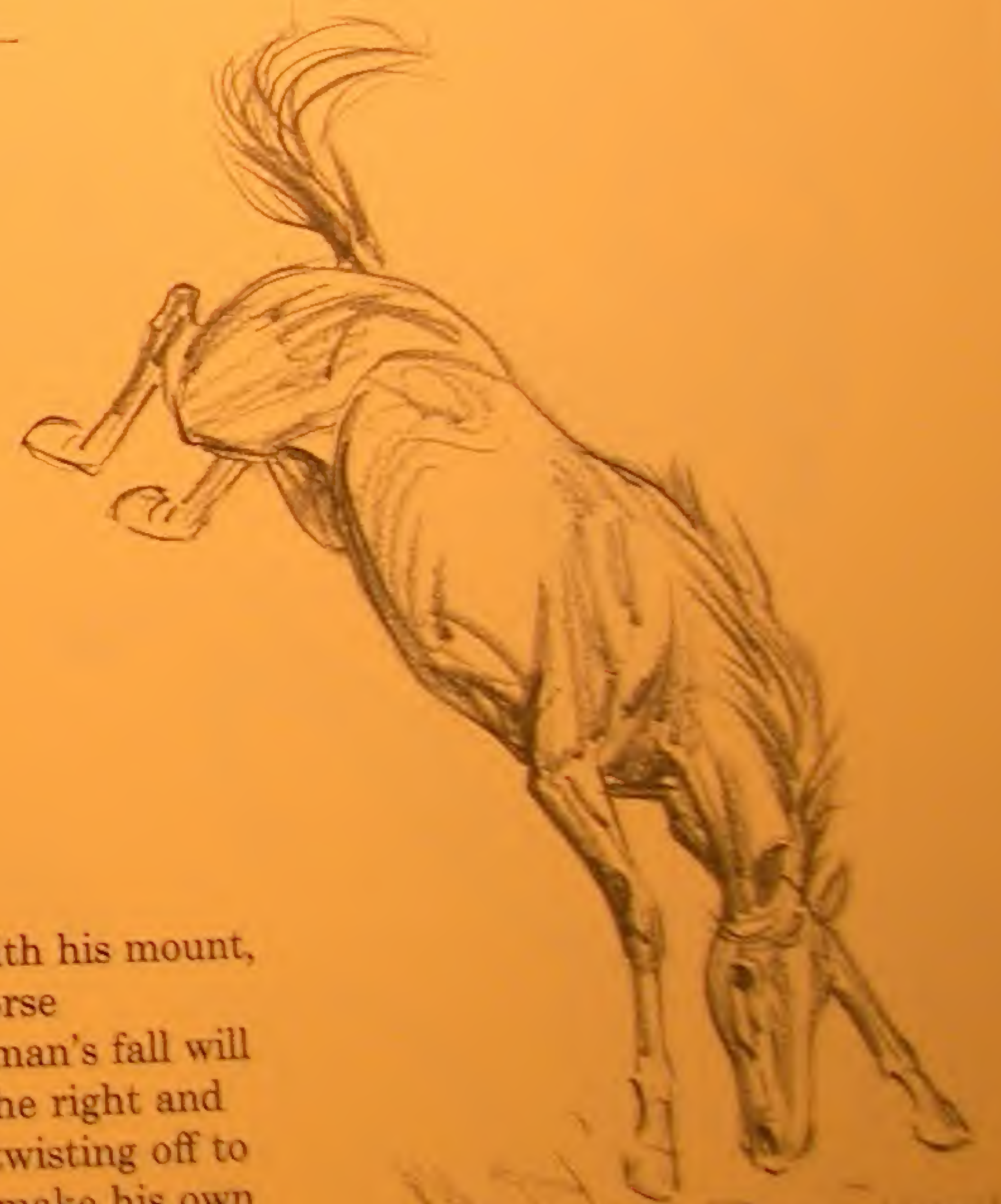


A horse may buck out of good spirits or to throw his rider. The rodeo buckler is a professional, for this is the way he earns his living, and good buckers can be as valuable to rodeo producers as first-rate jumpers are to horse-show people. A good rodeo buckler will twist and turn in midair, spinning like a top, sometimes coming to earth facing the direction he has just come from.



This rider is parting company with his mount, and the action of the bucking horse determines which direction the man's fall will take. The horse has bucked to the right and then changed course in midair, twisting off to the left and leaving his rider to make his own way to the ground.

Have you noticed that professional bucking horses are unshod and that their feet are rough-looking?



Bucking out of good spirits.



## REARING

The only time I do not appreciate a rearing horse is when I'm on his back. Aside from that, the rearing horse can be a majestic sight.

Feel the excitement and put it into your drawing. Vary the thickness of your lines to make the picture more interesting to look at, and don't be afraid to flip that mane and tail around.

Note that the knees of a rearing horse are usually bent.





A horse that shies or spooks usually turns his head toward whatever has startled him, even as he moves away from it. Don't forget to adjust the eyes and mouth to give the horse an appropriate expression.



Notice in the drawing above how the left leg comes toward you and the right hind moves away.





1 First the horse will pick a spot, paw the ground, and start dropping his front end.



2 The hindquarters follow with a thump.



3 The horse will stay down for a moment stretched out like a dog.



4 Then, with a grunt, the front end comes up.





3 Just before rolling, the horse will stretch out.



4 Ah, this feels great!



7 A big heave and he's on his feet.



8 A quick shake to get rid of the dust. That was wonderful!



## GRAZING

Notice that one front leg of the adult horse is usually thrust back slightly to help him get his muzzle to the grass.

In profile, the top line of the horse makes a lovely rhythmic curve from head to tail. Make the most of this elegant line in your drawing.

Foals are too long-legged and too short-necked to get their muzzles down to the grass, but as you can see they manage anyway.





The horse seen from all angles in motion—and at rest.







Blaze



Snip



Stripe



Star



Star, stripe, and snip



Star and stripe



Bald



Coronet



Half pastern



Pastern



Ankle



Half stocking



Full stocking



Outside heel



Both heels



Inside heel

No markings







When you know what a good leg looks like, it is relatively easy to pick out the faulty ones. There are many faults and blemishes, too many to illustrate here, but these are the most common and the most obvious.

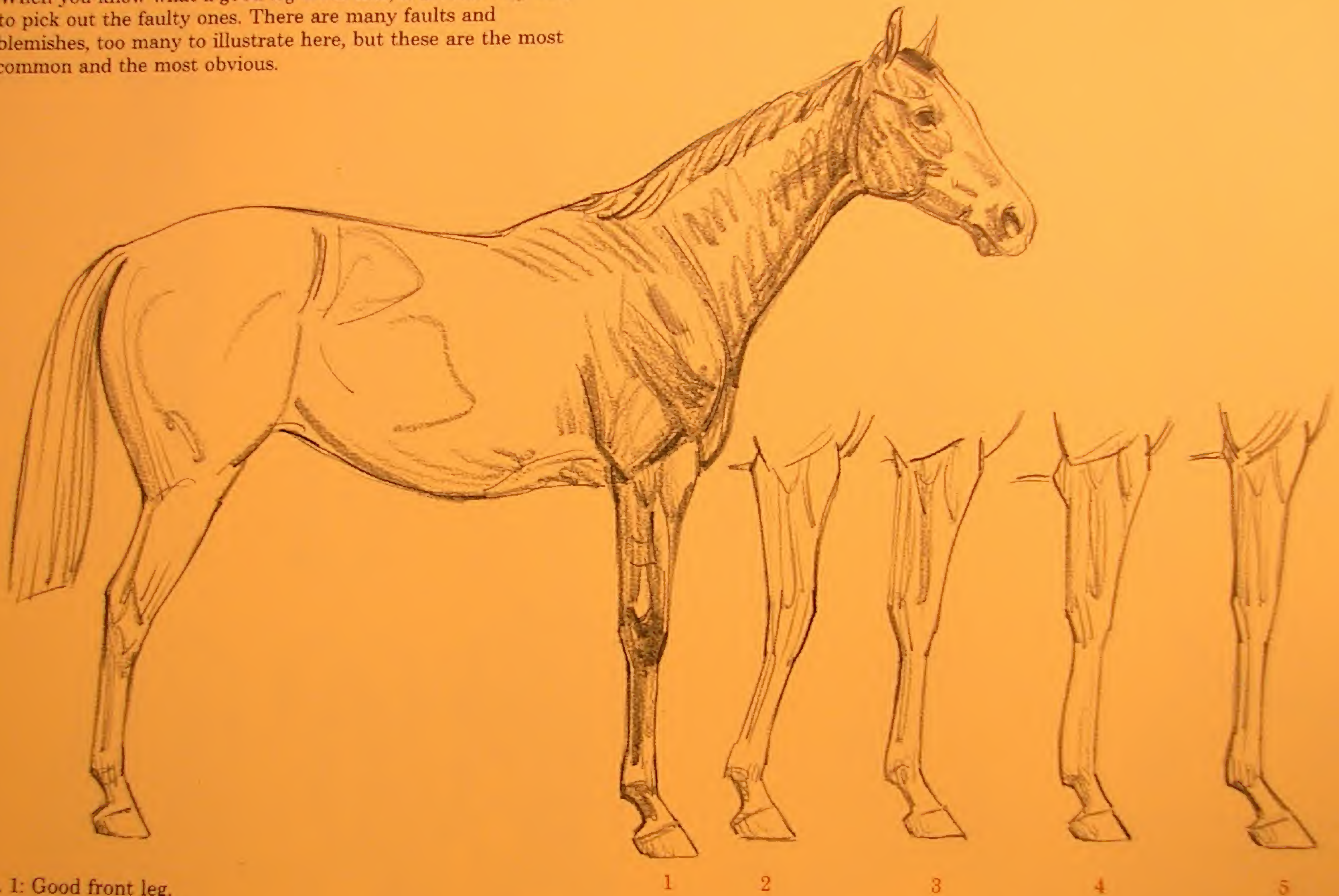


Fig. 1: Good front leg.

Fig. 2: Over at the knee.

Fig. 3: Tied below the knee (the top of the cannon bone is thinner than the bottom).

Fig. 4: Shoe boil at elbow, bowed tendon (the tendon is rounded at the back of the cannon bone); unlike the other faults on this page, these are caused by injury and are not present at birth.

Fig. 5: Weak forearm with long cannon bone; the pastern is too long and slopes at too great an angle.



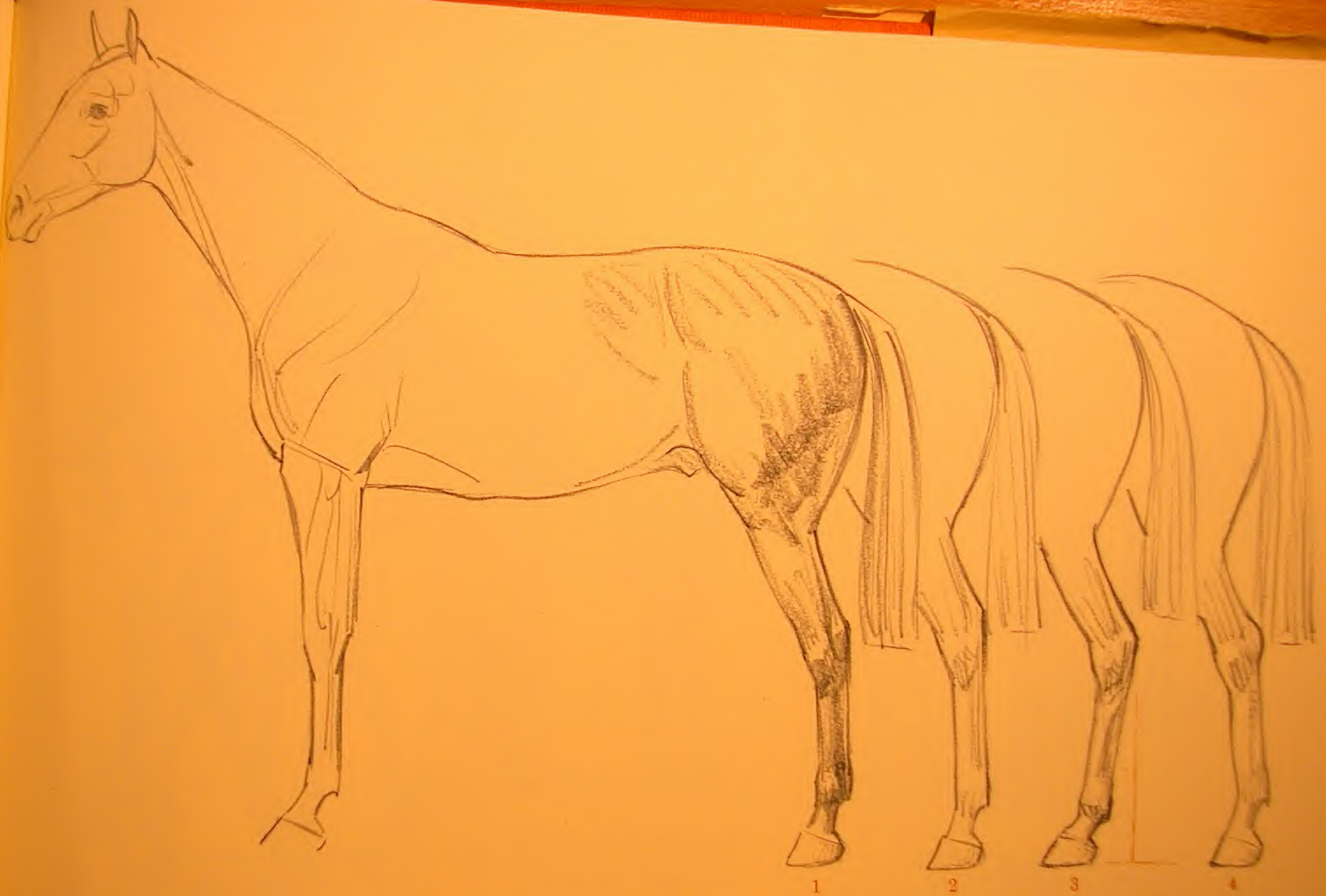


Fig. 1: Good hind leg.  
Fig. 2: Cannon bone too long.  
Fig. 3: Gaskin is weak and horse is sickle-hocked.  
Fig. 4: Capped hock, which shows a "filling," or swollen area, in front of the cannon bone; this is caused by injury.





At ten hours of age, this foal seems to be made of angles and sharp bumps. His neck and body are very short and his legs are very long; he is definitely an awkward creature.



In ten days the foal has filled out considerably and the sharp edges have begun to round off.



At one month he can gallop like an adult horse.



But he still has to spread his front legs far apart to graze.





At three months our foal is beginning to look like a horse.



At six months the colt is ready to be weaned from his mother. He is still very much of an adolescent but he is shaping up rapidly into adult proportions and size.







## The Quarter Horse

This breed is named for its great speed over short distances, generally a quarter of a mile, and many Quarter Horses are bred today as racehorses. Traditionally, however, the breed has been used to handle livestock and to perform in rodeos, and for this reason is usually pictured in Western tack.



The Quarter Horse's head is not as fine as that of the Thoroughbred, nor does it have the triangular shape of the Arab (see page 72).

I drew this Quarter Horse in the same position as the Thoroughbred so that you can see the difference in their conformation. The Quarter Horse stands closer to the ground than the Thoroughbred; his legs are shorter and stockier and his shoulder and hindquarters are heavier. Generally speaking, the Thoroughbred is streamlined, while the Quarter Horse is compact.

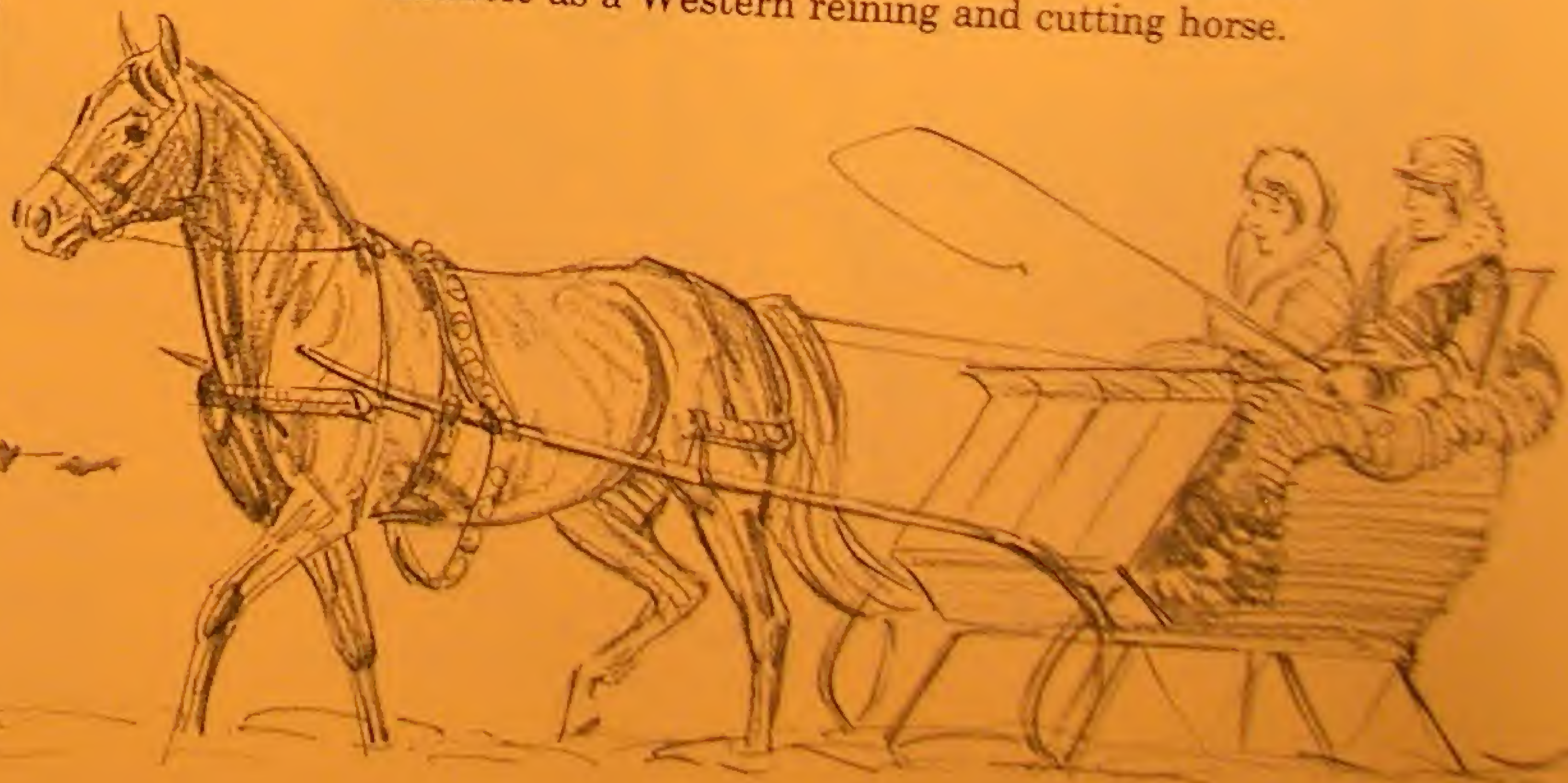


## The Morgan

This American breed is known for its good disposition and great strength and versatility. Not all Morgans resemble their common ancestor, Justin Morgan, in conformation, but the Morgan head and neck and general compactness are unmistakable.



The Morgan's speed and stamina have made him valuable as a Western reining and cutting horse.

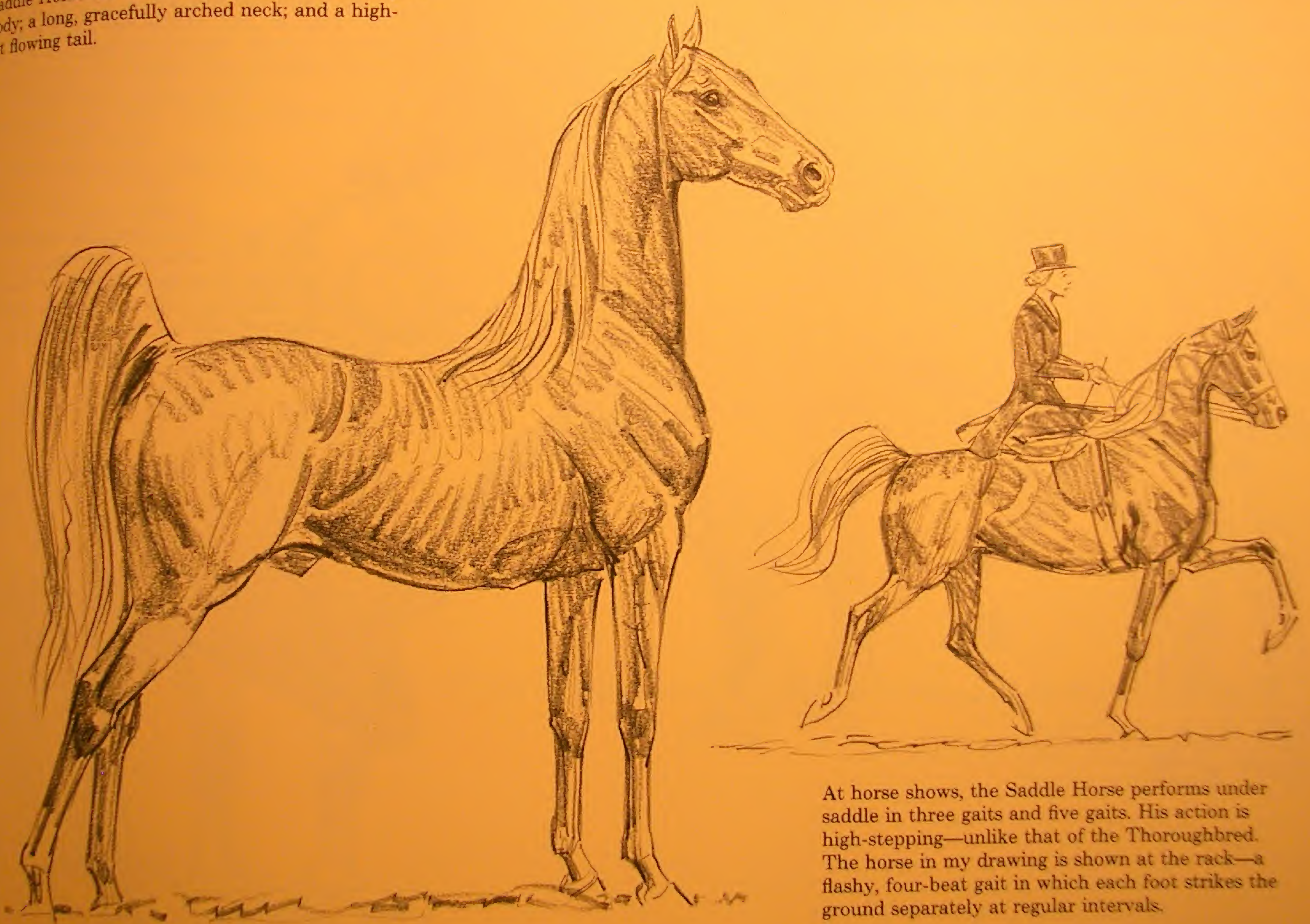


I like to depict a perky little Morgan pulling a sleigh along a snow-covered road in Vermont, where they have been bred for generations. All is still except for the sleigh bells which jingle merrily to the rhythm of the horse's gait.



## The Saddle Horse

Pure elegance is the word to describe the American Saddle Horse. He has a well-rounded, close-coupled body; a long, gracefully arched neck; and a high-set flowing tail.



At horse shows, the Saddle Horse performs under saddle in three gaits and five gaits. His action is high-stepping—unlike that of the Thoroughbred. The horse in my drawing is shown at the rack—a flashy, four-beat gait in which each foot strikes the ground separately at regular intervals.



## The Arabian

The Arabian is a very old breed, renowned for beauty, courage, and endurance. He has contributed many of his fine qualities to the light horse breeds, especially the Thoroughbred.

The Arab has a relatively short skull and a slender lower face. One of the outstanding characteristics of the head is the dished or concave face; note also the large, dark eyes and the small, sharply pointed ears.



The deep jowls and bulging forehead taper to an extremely fine muzzle, which gives the Arab head a triangular shape. In a drawing, I like to depict the Arab's head with finely drawn lines to show the horse's intelligence and nobility.





## Draft Horses

The draft breeds are the powerhouses of the horse world. Shown here are two Percherons, but there are four other important breeds—Clydesdale, Belgian, Shire, and Suffolk. They all have enormous weight and strength, and any drawing of a draft horse must depict these qualities. Your lines should be strong and positive to accomplish this. When viewing a draft horse from the front, notice especially his massive chest and the structure of his forelegs. Compare them to other types of horses.





## Ponies





### Relative Heights

The height of a horse is measured in hands from the ground to the top of the withers; one hand equals four inches. Therefore, a twelve-hand pony is 48 inches in height. For drawing purposes it is necessary to have a fair idea about the relative sizes of horses, especially if you intend to compose a group picture.

17 hands

16 hands

14½ hands

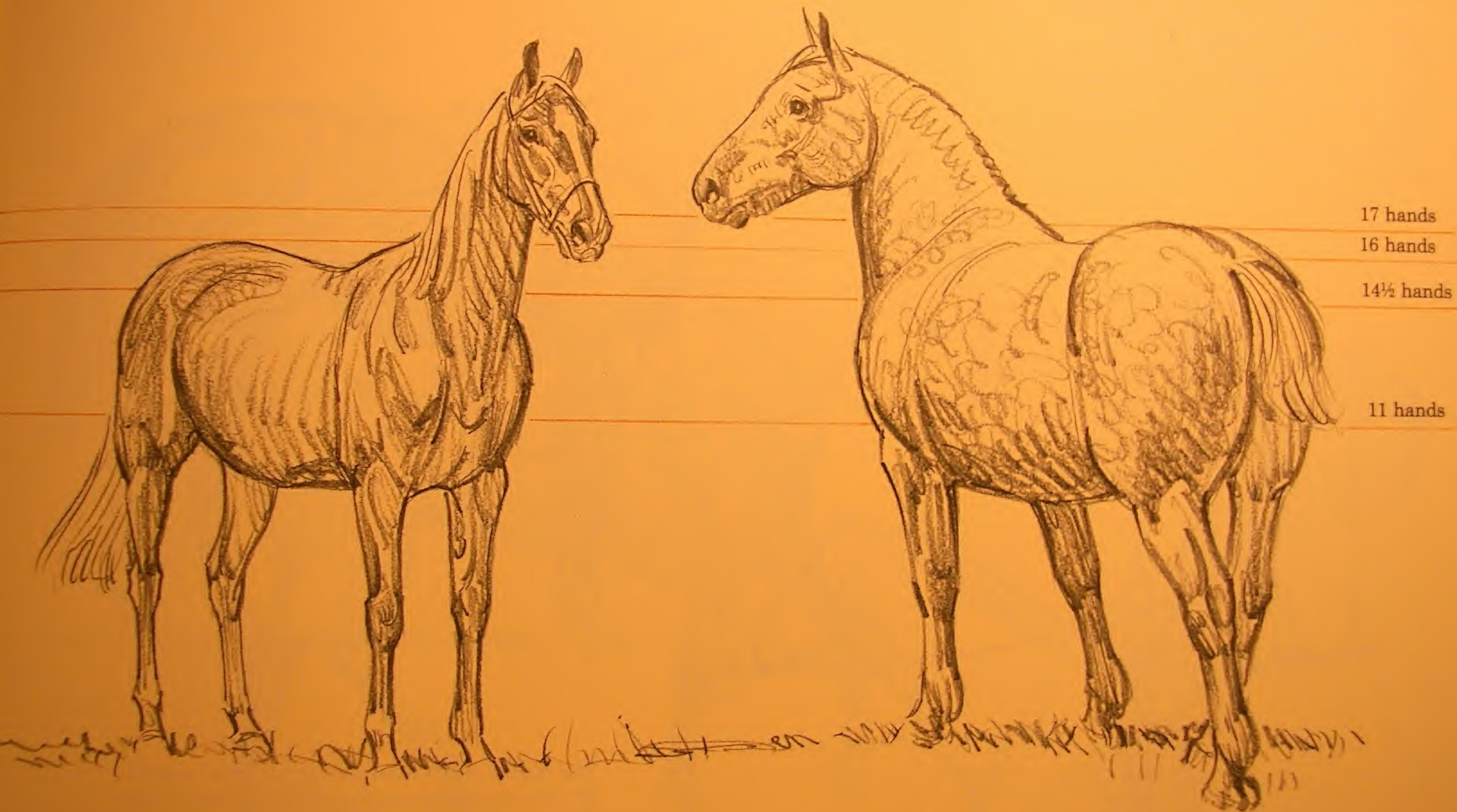
11 hands



The Shetland is the smallest of the pony breeds. His height ranges between ten and eleven hands.

The Connemara pony averages about 14½ hands, the limit for pony height.





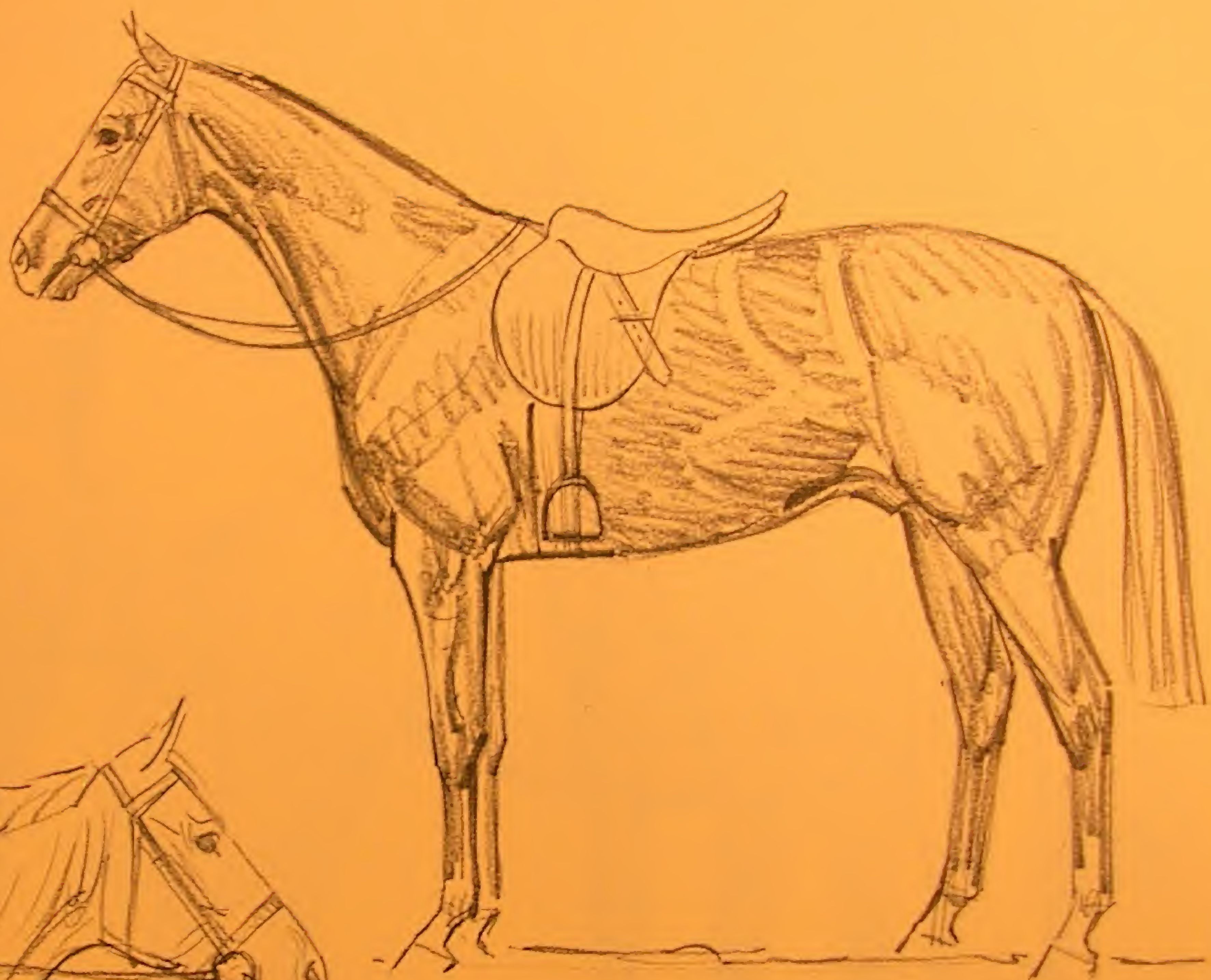
Sixteen hands is the average height for a Thoroughbred horse.

The draft horse is larger in bulk than in height. This one is about seventeen hands, but many are under that height.



### Hunt-seat (or Forward-seat) Equitation

This style lends itself mostly to cross-country riding and jumping. It is an easy, supple position, and the horse and rider should be pictured alert but relaxed. The rider's forearms and hands follow the line of the reins, which are held in both hands. The calf of the leg is slightly behind the girth of the saddle; I always draw an imaginary straight line from the base of the rider's throat to the heel.



The saddle above is an all-purpose type, suitable for hacking cross-country or jumping over fences. Note that the bit is a snaffle with a single rein.



## Stock-seat Equitation

The rider's leg is held straighter in Western-type riding than in the hunt seat, and the rider carries the reins in one hand. The curb bit has a long shank to which a single rein is attached.



This is a typical Western or stock saddle. There are as many varieties and designs of this type as there are in English saddles.



### Saddle-seat Equitation

The horses below are three-gaited American Saddle Horses, which perform in the show ring at the walk, trot, and canter. The rider sits far back on the horse in order to accentuate the horse's front action, which is high-stepping and animated. The appearance of the Saddle Horse should be one of great elegance, and the artist must always bear this in mind. Notice how the horse's shoulders move with the action of the legs; also note that the horse's hooves are longer than normal, which helps to create the high action. The saddle is much flatter than the type used in hunt-seat equitation.



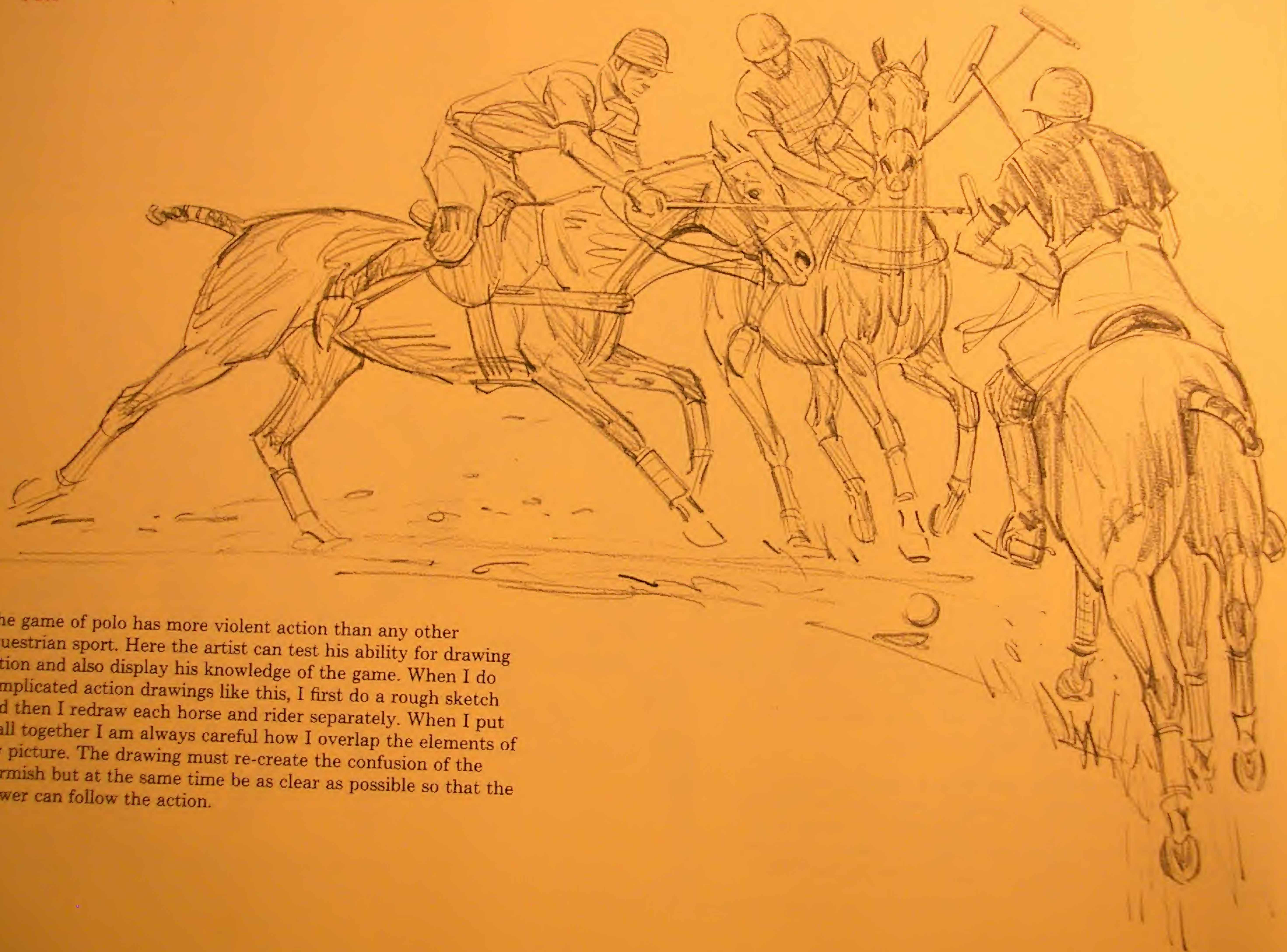




Hunting, polo, racing, and rodeo work are equestrian sports, but dressage is equestrian *art*. Fig. 1 shows a Lipizzaner of the Spanish Riding School in Vienna performing a capriole, one of the "airs above the ground," an example of the highest level of dressage. Note that the rider wears no stirrups.

Fig. 2 shows a horse and rider executing a collected canter, a movement in basic dressage. Dressage comes from the French term meaning to school a horse, and the aim of dressage is to teach the animal to move forward freely in a relaxed, rhythmic manner, accepting the bit and obeying the subtle aids of the rider.





The game of polo has more violent action than any other equestrian sport. Here the artist can test his ability for drawing action and also display his knowledge of the game. When I do complicated action drawings like this, I first do a rough sketch and then I redraw each horse and rider separately. When I put it all together I am always careful how I overlap the elements of my picture. The drawing must re-create the confusion of the skirmish but at the same time be as clear as possible so that the viewer can follow the action.



## Fox Hunting

When I picture a fox-hunting scene, I find myself drawing more than just horses, for riders and hounds and many other things are involved in this traditional sport. With fox-hunting subjects, you must pay strict attention to detail just as the participants do—the shape of the whip, the clothing, and the horse's tack and braids.





By fig. 3 the horse has acquired a mane, tail, eye, and nostril. Notice how the addition of these details starts to bring my horse to life.

If I should decide to alter the action of the legs or raise the head somewhat—or to lengthen or shorten the body—I can resort to the overlay method, saving what I want and eliminating the things I do not.



3

### MAKING CORRECTIONS

Sometimes looking at your drawing in a mirror will show up mistakes, but I find that it is difficult to make corrections using a mirror. Here is the correction method that suits me best. I will make a drawing on a sheet of tracing paper and then turn the paper over to look at my drawing in reverse. This gives me a fresh look at the horse, and I can often see mistakes this way. I will correct my mistakes on the wrong side and then flop the paper back to its original side, erasing the areas that were wrong. (I use a kneaded rubber eraser because it will not tear the paper.) My corrections will show through the paper, and I can sketch in fresh lines over it. I continue to flop the paper back and forth, correcting as I go until my drawing looks correct from both sides.

If my tracing paper should start coming apart under this abuse, I slip it under a fresh sheet, trace everything down, and keep on going.



## USING ONE SILHOUETTE TO WORK TWO WAYS

This little discovery of mine will give you a sense of the general relationship of forms. In a three-quarter view, the distance from head to withers to rump and the distance between the front and rear legs are the same whether the horse is facing toward you or away. But when the horse is seen in a three-quarter back view, you must enlarge the hindquarters and the hind legs as indicated by the colored line in fig. 3, because they are now closer to you than they were in fig. 1. Otherwise the silhouette will remain the same.



1 Three-quarter front view

2 Remove all inside lines

3 Put in new lines to make a three-quarter back view





1 Three-quarter front view

2 Silhouette

3 Three-quarter back view



1 Three-quarter front view

2 Silhouette

3 Three-quarter back view

1 Direct back view

2 Silhouette

3 Direct front view

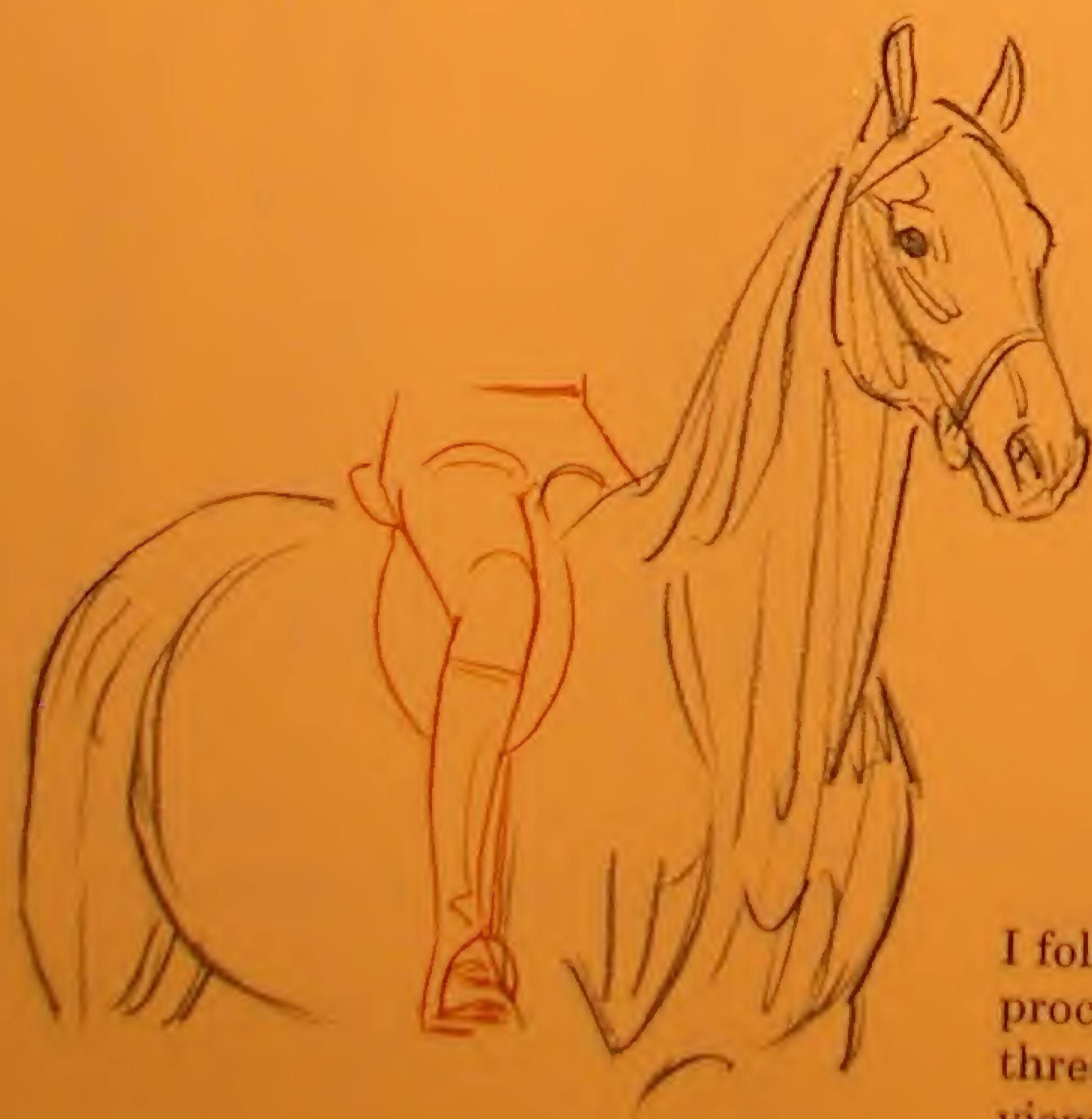


## PLACING THE RIDER IN THE SADDLE

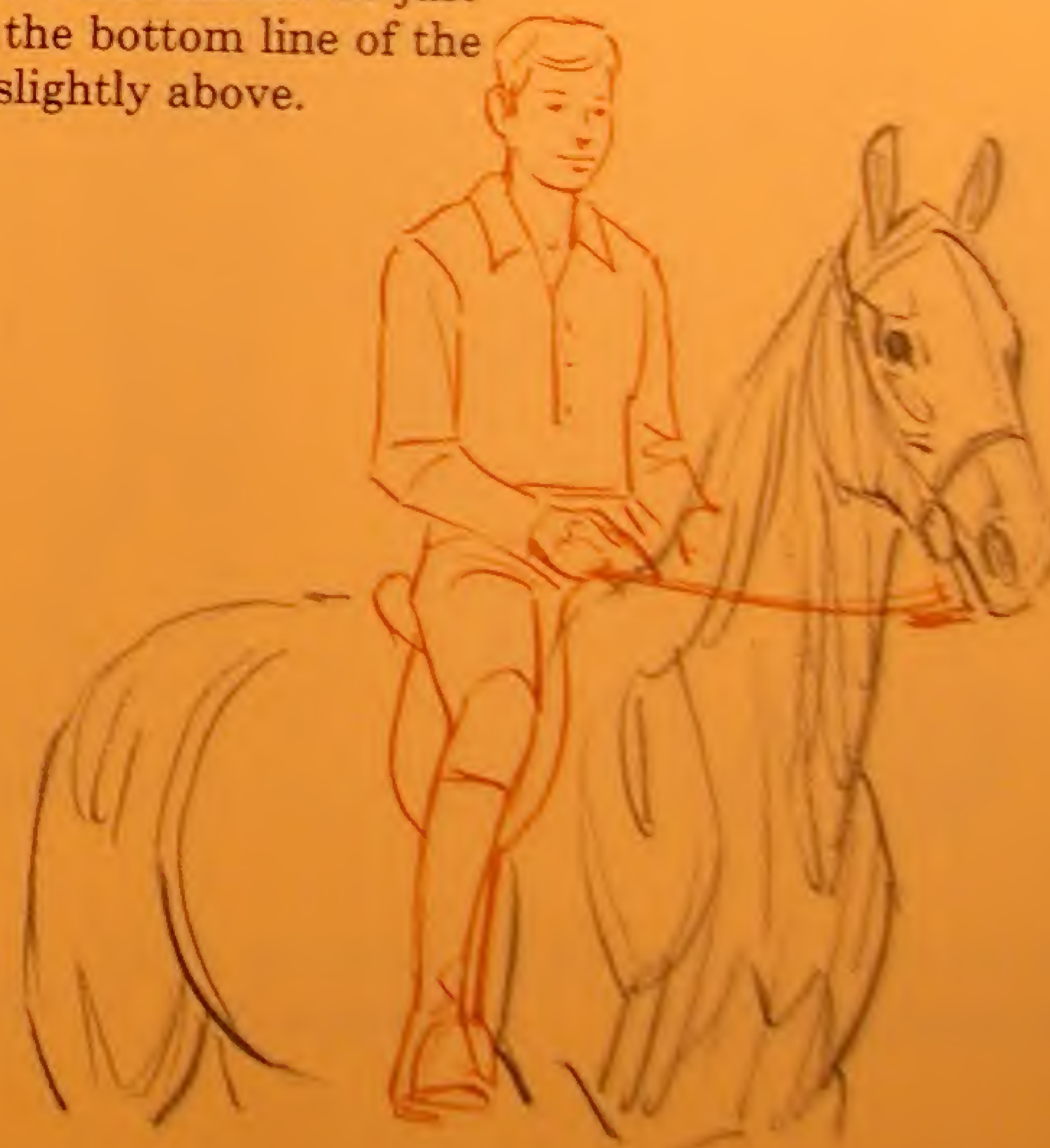


1. Start with the saddle, which goes on just behind the withers.

2. Next I draw in the lower half of the rider, working downward from the saddle. The English rider's foot should be just about even with the bottom line of the horse's belly, or slightly above.



I follow the same procedure with a three-quarter front view.







3. If I begin with the rider's seat in the saddle, he'll still be there when I finish, not below or above it.

4. Then I work upward from the saddle. I use the top of the horse's head as a guide, knowing that if the head should swing back, it would be even with the rider's chin.



Three-quarter  
back view



The cowboy's foot will often hang below the horse's belly because he rides with a longer stirrup than the hunt-seat rider above.



## USING PHOTOGRAPHS

A good photograph can be very helpful to the artist as a reference for certain details, especially in making portraits of horses with special characteristics. But photographs may distort form, even though they look all right at first glance. Remember that the horse is a long animal. If the photographer focuses too close to the head, the horse in the photograph will have a head that is too large and a body that is too small, especially in the hindquarters. If the photographer focuses too close to the rear end, the reverse will happen. The experience of looking at many horses will help you detect the distortion and correct it in your drawing.

One way to check for distortion is to place a sheet of tracing paper over the photograph and trace the outline of the horse. When you remove the photograph, the distortion will pop out, for your eyes will not be influenced by the details in the photograph.



The photographs of horses on this page are obviously distorted. Because they are photographs, we have a tendency to believe that they must be correct, but nothing could be further from the truth. To get a good photograph of a horse in profile, focus your camera a bit forward of the horse's hip. Using a telephoto lens and shooting from a distance will enable you to get a true picture of a horse in any position.



Fig. 1  
The focus of the camera was too far forward. The distortion is subtle, but the head came out too large and the hindquarters too small. The colored line indicates my correction.

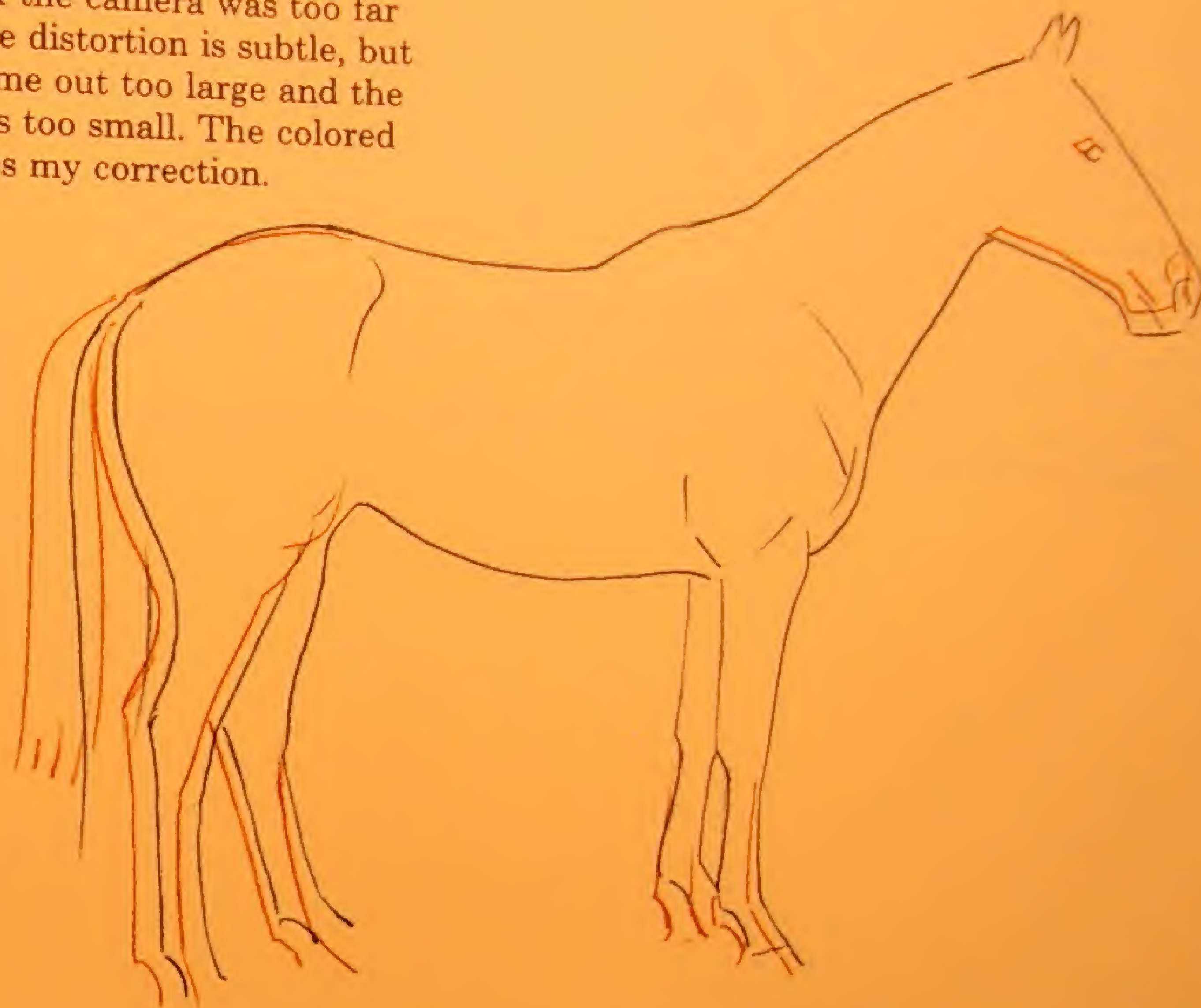
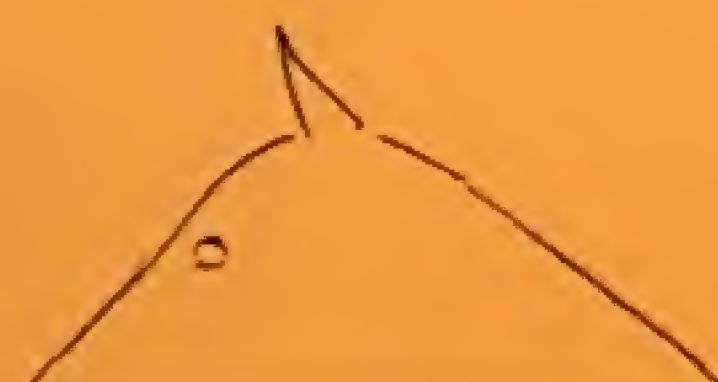


Fig. 2  
Here the head was much too large and the hindquarters fell away too rapidly.







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cantering, pacing, ambling, jumping, falling,  
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conformation and markings,  
conformation faults and the process of aging,  
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